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A Journal of Opinion

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National Unity

The reëlection of President Roosevelt is a piece of great good news for this country and for the cause of democracy throughout the world. Yet it is not an occasion for the sort of hysterical jubilation we have sometimes seen in the past from the winning side in an election. It is a fearful responsibility that the President now assumes—even greater than that of 1932 and much more serious than in 1936. This country is in grave danger from Hitler—a danger that is only prevented from becoming immediate and desperate by the magnificent resistance Great Britain is putting up. No good American can be lighthearted as he confronts the tasks that lie ahead of us.

On every hand we are hearing appeals for national unity, and it is probably well that this should be so. Although it is hard to forgive some of the things that were said on both sides—but especially by the Republicans—it is desirable that time should not be spent in recriminations that is badly needed for the task ahead. Nevertheless, the subject of national unity is one to be approached with some care. We must not impose on the American people by pressure from above a semblance of unanimity which is in fact only a cloak for sharp disagreements that people are afraid to bring into the open. It is a permanent characteristic of a democracy that its citizens shall continue to differ in many ways. In the second place, whose national unity would ours be? Some of Mr. Willkie's followers already show a tendency to try to take everybody into their own camp. The election returns are eloquent proof that the American people do not want the kind of national unity Mr. Willkie proposed, or want it on

his terms. Third, national unity for what? The phrase implies a common purpose and we should be sorry to believe that that purpose was merely to build enough guns to keep Hitler off. This nation has a tremendous role to play in world history; but the first essential is that we should make up our minds what that role is to be.

Mr. Roosevelt's Popularity

Mr. Roosevelt's popular majority is somewhat less than in 1936; and probably a good many people will be saying that therefore his career is in decline, having reached its high point four years ago. In our judgment this is false; it is a much greater feat to win less overwhelmingly this year than it was to produce the landslide of 1936. In the first place, he had to overcome the tremendous handicap of the third-term tradition, which was not directed against him as a person. In the second place, every President accumulates more and more enemies the longer he stays in office. Finally, nowadays it is far easier than in the past for a population to get tired of its leaders. It hears them on the radio, sees them in the newsreels and the rotogravure sections, gets far more opportunity to view them in the flesh than ever before. Under such circumstances, for a national public figure to survive for eight years and still be able to win an election is a miracle.

The Press Is Wrong Again

Once more the American people have firmly rejected the advice of their newspapers. Of the leading dailies of the country an overwhelming majority supported Mr. Willkie—probably at least 65 percent.

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The President was endorsed by only about 20 percent. The remainder professed to be neutral but it is safe to say that most of them were neutral in a spirit hostile to Mr. Roosevelt.

This divergence between a majority of the newspapers and a majority of their readers is a disturbing factor in the life of this country. The editor of *The Chicago Daily News* wrote not long ago on this point that he could see no cause for anxiety; apparently he meant that the papers were conscientious in their attitude, that their readers recognized this and that it did not matter. If he meant this, we think he was wrong. There has grown up among millions of Americans an impression that most newspapers support a class interest—that of their publishers, their advertisers and the common friends of both. With this impression goes the view that what these favored groups desire rarely runs parallel with the best interest of the greatest mass of the people. If this isn't a serious matter for the publishers, what is?

It has become commonplace to say that the unsigned editorials in the daily newspapers have lost their influence; that their place has been taken by the signed, widely syndicated columns. But in this election nearly all the top-rank columnists were for Willkie; of the six leading ones who come most readily to mind, four were for Willkie, one for Roosevelt and one dodged the issue. Many papers were true to their trust in that they reported honestly in their news columns facts disadvantageous to their chosen candidate; others, like the Hearst chain, were disgracefully unfair. But even the papers that told the truth should be seriously concerned, in our judgment, about the waning confidence of their readers in what they recommend. No tremendous industry with huge capital investment should want to find itself in such a precarious position of declining good will.

Why the Polls Failed

Most of the prophets who tried to predict the election outcome are wearing red faces. Mr. Rogers Dunn predicted 29 states and 350 electoral votes for Willkie. Emil Hurja made substantially the same guess; so did the syndicated columnist, David Lawrence, and Mr. Arthur Henning of *The Chicago Tribune*. A. M. Crossley gave the election to Mr. Roosevelt, but fell short by about 150 electoral votes. Joseph W. Martin Jr., Republican national chairman, said Willkie by 324 votes. General Hugh Johnson was perfectly sure Willkie would win and that the Gallup poll would go the way of *The Literary Digest*. John L. Lewis had "no doubt" that President Roosevelt would be defeated.

The great success among the professionals was Elmo Roper of *Fortune Magazine*, who came very close with a prediction of 55.2 percent of the popular vote for the President. Dr. George Gallup prophesied 52 per-

cent for Roosevelt; it is not yet sure whether his error was larger than the 4 percent which he insists he should be allowed. Dr. Gallup has failed to mention the highly important fact that his percentage of error has almost always operated against President Roosevelt. Apparently not even his scientific method reached down to all of the inarticulate masses, the people who firmly intended to vote for Roosevelt but were afraid to say so to any slick young stranger with notebook and pencil. In that case, however, how explain Mr. Roper's remarkable accuracy not only on this occasion but previous ones?

Among the prophets who came off pretty well is *The New Republic*. In our *Voters' Handbook*, published October 7, we predicted that Mr. Roosevelt would carry 40 states with 455 electoral votes. We attribute our success to hard work, clean living and 99 percent to luck.

Mr. Lewis Should Resign

Before the election, there were rumors that John L. Lewis intended to go back on his promise to resign if Mr. Roosevelt were reelected. These stories said that great demonstrations of loyalty to him by CIO unions all over the country would be prearranged, so that he could gracefully "yield to irresistible pressure" and continue his place. By the time these words are read, the rumors may have been proved false or true. We hope they were false. Mr. Lewis should now resign for the good of the American labor movement. On a vitally important issue it has been shown that only a small minority of his supposed followers was prepared to take his advice; indeed, it is quite possible that his support did Mr. Willkie more harm than good. The rift between the CIO and the AFL has for some time past been continued chiefly because of Mr. Lewis' personal pique. In days like these, the labor movement cannot afford such expensive leadership.

Mr. Lewis' great strength in the past has been that he was a good man in a fight. He could stand up to a stubborn employer when most labor leaders were afraid to. This is a useful function, but something else is needed as well. The kind of leader labor needs is the kind who not only can fight but can win his battle before he ever enters the room where the employer awaits him. The new technique is one of mobilizing public opinion, enlisting the aid of government bodies and the law, spreading the proof of the workers' just claims on the record for everyone to see. Mr. Lewis is so old-fashioned that he has never been able to adopt the new methods. He despises the power of independent public opinion and has said so many times. As head of the CIO he never made any effective statement of his case to the American public. He is like the stegosaurus of prehistoric times, heavily armored but utterly incapable of survival in an evolutionary world.

The Labor Party

One of the most cheering signs of the election was that, according to early returns, the American Labor Party in New York State seemed likely to poll 300,000 votes and contribute much to the victory in that state of the Democratic national ticket, which it endorsed. This is almost as good a showing as it made in the overwhelming triumph of 1936, and indicates that under the skillful leadership of Mr. Eli Oliver it has retrieved the loss it had suffered from factional disputes. The left wing, which had been contending for control of the party in New York City and is often charged with following the Communist line, reelected Representative Marcantonio but otherwise did not show great strength. This demonstration, like many others in the nation, proves that labor is overwhelmingly for the President, though independent of the Democratic Party organization.

The New Congress

Probably the rudest shock to Mr. Roosevelt's opponents was the failure of the Republican Party to make gains in the House. They were repeatedly assured by the Republican management that their outpouring of funds would bring a minimum of fifty new seats, possibly seventy. As it turned out, the Democrats' comfortable control appears to have been increased by one vote. On the other hand, the so-called liberal bloc in the House—the Representatives supporting the full New Deal program—has failed to make a recovery from its shattering defeat two years ago. The heart of the liberal bloc was the powerful Progressive and Farmer-Labor delegations of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and these seats are still held by Republicans. The New Deal delegations of the Pacific Coast have not made good their 1938 losses, and have even suffered further defeats in California. The most militantly New Deal group in the last two sessions of the House has been Mrs. Mary T. Norton's Labor Committee, and its members seem to have been unscathed. The Democrats' control of the Senate was, of course, unbreakable, and the few changes that have occurred appear not to have shifted the balance of liberal-conservative forces. Senator La Follette was reported as likely to pull through in Wisconsin as this was written; it would be a shame if the Wisconsin electorate deprived the country of his thorough, careful, clear-headed leadership. Probably we shall see less sabotage on the part of the Southern Democratic leadership of Congress, which remains virtually intact, than we did in Mr. Roosevelt's first two terms. For many months at least, the chief measures before Congress will be defense appropriations, upon which there is unanimity among all Democratic factions. The size of Mr. Roosevelt's electoral vote will give Mr. Roosevelt a prestige in the eyes of Congressmen that he has

never had before—a greater prestige, perhaps, than that of any President since Andrew Jackson.

Tammany Takes a Beating

During the campaign there was good evidence that Tammany Hall was trying to stab Mr. Roosevelt in the back. Apparently it didn't succeed; even its own voters went down the line for him. It also failed in its effort to destroy Proportional Representation in New York City in the interest of machine domination, graft and corruption.

This would be an excellent moment for the voters of New York to think hard about destroying Tammany once and for all by setting up a decent organization in its place. The Wigwam has no real reason for existing any more; the petty helps it used to give the poor have been swallowed up in the very great helps they get from the federal government. There are few men of honor, character and ability in its leadership. Its only real purpose is to steal, which it used to do at the rate of one million dollars a day. That purpose hardly warrants its continued existence.

In New York, Tammany is practically coextensive with the Catholic Church, which suggests that the responsible leaders of the Church ought to think seriously about repudiating the Wigwam. Quite apart from the ethical questions involved, the outstanding fact about the Church during its whole career has been that it has never stayed very long on the losing side in any struggle. Tammany is the losing side; what can the Church possibly hope to gain from going on that would counterbalance the losses it incurs?

Goodbye, Mr. Harvey

George U. Harvey, president of the Borough of Queens, in New York City, announced before the election that if Mr. Roosevelt won, he would go and live in Canada. After the result was announced, he went back on his word. Mr. Harvey has no right to trifle with our affections this way. In the campaign one of the brightest hopes was that a Democratic victory meant that American public life would be free of the ineffable Mr. Harvey. You said you were going, George; get up and go.

War Hysteria in Canada

The Canadian Civil Liberties Union asks funds to appeal the case of Wilfred Ravenor, proprietor of the New Age Book Shop in Vancouver. Ravenor has been sentenced to one year's imprisonment and two hundred dollars' fine for possessing "in quantity" documents "likely to be prejudicial to the safety of the state."

The documents in question are, of course, communistic, and communistic writings have been held a danger to the state by North American courts in various ways for a long time. Ravenor's counsel argued

that most of the writings in question could be found in Ottawa and provincial public libraries, that some had been printed in *The New York Times*. He called in four professors to testify that much of the literature (speeches and articles by Marx, Lenin and Engels, D. N. Pritt's study of the Moscow trials, Gorky's biography of Lenin, etc.) was accepted as standard reading in the universities.

Magistrate H. S. Woods, however, finding the accused guilty, handed down a written judgment showing that the governor-in-council "intended to make it an offense for one to be in possession in quantity of such literature" because it was "likely to be used for propaganda purposes." He also cited a previous judgment of this year which said of the War Measures Act: "The whole intention is to compel individuals to maintain silence or speak in the unconquerable spirit by which troops in action must be moved if they are to win."

Such an "intention" is war hysteria in a nutshell. The alternative—"silence" or "unconquerable spirit"—is a procrustean choice no democratic citizen should be called upon to make. If it is really the intention of the Canadian government to reduce its citizens to a state in which they can only walk about with sullen faces or, alternatively, with ringing voices, this intention shows more than mere ignorance of wartime psychology. It shows planned determination to win the war on the government's terms alone—a far greater menace to the state than the dubious anti-war propaganda of a minority.

The Greek Campaign

The Italian drive into Greece has brought with it certain factors encouraging to Great Britain. The drive is moving slowly, though it is reported to have broken the Metaxas line by reaching the headwaters of the Viosa River. On the other hand, the Greeks, with surprising vitality and ingenuity, now appear to be pressing the Italian flank in a move against the supply base of Koritza.

These are but the short-term aspects of the invasion, however. The larger, more crucial issue is the long-term effect of the Italian attack. The first and most important effect has been to lay open the Greek islands in the Sea of Candia to the establishment of British garrisons. Crete is now reported to be so occupied. Used as a British naval and air base, lying little more than half as far as from the Italian boot as Alexandria, Crete offers British fleet and air units an ideal spot from which to harry not only the nearby Dodecanese Islands but also the southern industrial regions of Italy herself, and lines of supply with Libya. Indeed, supplies are the key issue in Italy's military potential—supplies for her industries, her people, and her armies in Libya and Albania. Whether or not she can be struck decisively at supply points will depend on the ability of

Greek and British forces to utilize their hold on Crete—whose airfields will be useless if Britain cannot spare, or cannot send quickly, the necessary planes and ground crews. If this can be done, Italy's march may bring disaster to her—a fact we may be sure is fully appreciated in Germany and by her air-force leaders whose planes cannot now be used to the full over Britain.

France's Negro Minister

The appointment of Senator Henry Lémery of Martinique to the post of Colonial Minister in the Pétain government caused virtually no interest in the United States. One could not tell from reading his little-known name that Lémery was a Negro, political representative of Martinique for twenty-six years and for a decade a rabid fascist.

We read now that Senator Lémery has been dropped by Vichy and it is interesting to speculate on the reasons for his promotion and dismissal. It is probable that Vichy believed they were being infinitely subtle in appointing a Negro to the Colonial Ministry—for the first time in French history. The appointment was made when Vichy was most uncertain of the French colonies: North Africa was showing alarming de Gaulle sympathies and Lémery's own island, Martinique, was reportedly 80-percent opposed to Vichy. What better choice than Lémery as a rallying point for the colored peoples of the French empire? There was no danger involved; Lémery had proved time and again his hatred of French socialists and paid doglike homage to a France "which had been willing to honor a descendant of slaves."

Why, now, has Lémery been dropped? Because Vichy has greater confidence in the African colonies and has definitely crossed off Martinique as a loyal island? More probably it is the result of the declining power of the French government in handling its foreign affairs. The real fascists, who know their job, have taken over and the Nazis could hardly welcome the promotion of non-Aryans. Lémery threw over his own people and feathered his nest by being a "sound" man; now he has ample time to consider what years of reactionary activities bring as reward to faithful Negroes.

Oregon Repairs Mistake

One of the sorriest chapters in the history of organized labor in the Far West was closed with a happy ending recently when the Oregon State Supreme Court nullified the sweeping anti-union law enacted by the voters in 1938. The decision was based on the rulings of the United States Supreme Court in recent cases involving anti-picketing ordinances.

The Oregon law restricted practically all the legitimate activities of labor unions. It made effective strikes and boycotts impossible. It left unions open to suits, injunctions, restraining orders and a hundred other limitations. The statute was adopted by the people

after a long campaign of misrepresentation put on by the Associated Farmers. The "Farmers" served as fronts. Anti-union employers contributed the money.

Now the United States Supreme Court, and the Oregon court following suit, have taken the shackles off organized labor in Oregon. The case was appealed by lawyers representing the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods. It should give John L. Lewis some pause to realize that virtually all the men who sponsored the anti-labor law are today backing Wendell L. Willkie for President.

A Correction

In the department, "From The New Republic Mailbag," in our issue of October 21, we summarized a letter from George F. Colwell of Glasco, Kansas. Mr. Colwell made the statement that a farm paper, The Farm Journal and The Farmer's Wife, had permitted use of its list of subscribers to send out campaign literature in favor of Willkie. Graham Patterson, president, denies this charge and sends us a letter from Mr. Colwell in which he withdraws it. The New Republic regrets that the statement appeared in our columns and is glad to give conspicuous publication to this correction.

News Notes of a Week

There were rumors from Switzerland of an Axis-Russian plan to divide the Balkans both territorially and in spheres of influence. . . . Rome reported an Axis-Soviet pact to bar Turkish aid to Britain. . . . The British placed orders for a large number of freighters in the United States, to offset the growing menace of German U-boats. . . . Churchill complained of the lack of British naval bases in Eire. . . . The RAF continued its systematic bombing of Germany and German-held areas, smashing the newly repaired ports in northern France. . . . President Cárdenas foresaw an early "effective and satisfactory settlement of all pending questions" between the United States and Mexico. . . . The island of Guam was struck by the worst typhoon since 1900, causing heavy damage but no loss of life.

Thomas E. Dewey ordered an inquiry into the "kneeing" of a patrolman by White House Secretary Stephen Early. . . . President Roosevelt declared the government had no intention of socializing medicine. . . . Unfilled orders of the Bethlehem Steel Company were the highest in history, as was the number of employed workers. . . . Twenty thousand bombers, beyond those already ordered, were reported being planned for by the War Department at a cost of \$2,000,000,000. . . . John L. Lewis was said to be determined to keep his pledge not to run for leadership of the CIO in the coming election. . . . The New York Post said that after promising his vote to Willkie, Mr. Lewis was disbarred from voting in Alexandria, because he had failed to register.

Roosevelt's Mandate

THE GREATEST INTERNATIONAL EVENT of the week, and very likely of the year and the decade as well, was the decisive victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the American election. It was an event overflowing with significance for the American people, but mainly because of its meaning for the whole world in the struggle of democracy against the rule of force. This is so, not only because it reassures the British of the utmost possible support in their fight for life, and not only because it means a disappointment to Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese militarists. It is also because Mr. Roosevelt embodies, more than any other leader, the aspirations of the masses for fulfilment of the promise of democracy throughout the whole social order, domestic and international alike. The President is, as we have said, a great symbol; this is what his victory means abroad, and this, we believe, accounts mainly for the decision of the electorate in this country. In this critical hour they wanted a man whose experience fitted him for the job, and whose direction they could trust.

In saying this we do not mean to cast any doubt on the sincerity of Mr. Willkie's promises to aid Britain, to speed defense, to oppose the dictators. It was fortunate that no public split on this issue marred the campaign. The enemies of democracy in foreign lands should not make the mistake of assuming that the millions of Americans who voted the Republican ticket are their friends or can be made their tools. Nevertheless a defeat of Mr. Roosevelt would have looked like a rejection of his strong stand. It would have been a sign that the appeasers, plus the pro-Nazis and pro-Fascists in this country—who, in spite of Mr. Willkie's repudiation of them, worked indefatigably for him—had made a remarkable show of strength. Even more important, it would have returned to power the business and financial interests which in every other democracy under attack have awakened too late, have been incompetent in providing defense, and have been willing to come to terms with the aggressor. Hitler had good reason to know how he wanted the election decided.

Behind this broad meaning of the election, there were a number of other cross currents, not easy to disentangle. It surely cannot be said that the people who voted for Mr. Roosevelt gave him a referendum mandate for every one of a whole series of specific domestic policies, or that those who voted against him were all opposed to each one of these policies. If anything like this were true, the hope for American unity in these critical times would be dim, for decisive as the President's majority is, it would be dangerous for slightly more than half the people to try to govern the other part in a way that the latter bitterly resented. It seems to us, however, that the more important reasons for the

voters' decisions, aside from the dominating one, can be discerned fairly plainly, and certain conclusions can be drawn concerning the mandate which the President has received.

The core of Republican strength consisted, as it always does, of hardshelled conservatives who oppose whatever political measures embody social progress for the moment, and who now detest the New Deal, body and soul. These die-hards, however, form a small minority and can never come anywhere near winning an election without the aid of millions of others who disagree with them on social policy. Mr. Willkie himself gave practical recognition to that fact in the campaign, as Mr. Landon had done in 1936, by endorsing most of the New Deal social program in substance. It can fairly be said first of all, therefore, that the social reforms introduced by this administration are supported by a majority far larger than that which voted for Mr. Roosevelt, and that he has a clear mandate to continue and strengthen them.

The third-term issue might easily have defeated Mr. Roosevelt if it had not been for the international situation. It was headlined in the most extravagant terms by the opposition right through the eleventh hour of the campaign. Probably it swayed many voters who would have preferred the President on other grounds. We believe their judgment was wrong, for this tradition, in spite of the ordinary reasons for observing it, is not one that need bind us. It is safe to assume that on account of the burdens of the office no President will desire a third term; Mr. Roosevelt long declined to accept the suggestion. It is nonsense to talk of establishing a dynasty or dictatorship in any larger sense than that in which the continued incumbency of a single party always builds up a nucleus of power, even under different Presidents. And this issue is canceled, for the present, with the outcome of the election itself. It has little to do with the way in which the citizens want the President to conduct himself, once he is elected. It is clear enough that even those who voted for him want him to be a democratic and constitutional executive rather than a personal Führer, and there is no danger of his wanting to be the latter.

An important number of votes was cast against Mr. Roosevelt because of the fear that he would lead us into war. This includes not merely the foreign-dominated blocs influenced by Fascists, Nazis and Communists, but many good Americans inclined to isolation. But even here there is no sharp disagreement between his followers and most of the opposition concerning the aims of policy. Again and again it has been demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of Americans desires not to engage in war, but is equally strongly in favor of aid to Britain, of full arming, and of no surrender to the dictators. The only way to keep out of war without abject surrender in a situation like the present, is to enable Britain to stand, and to refuse to

follow the policy of appeasement in any particular. If Mr. Roosevelt does this with all the force at his command, he will be serving the purpose of those sincere Americans who voted against him on the war issue as well as that purpose can possibly be served.

In our opinion the motive for opposition to which the President needs to pay most attention was that which influenced those who, though for him on social and international grounds, were disappointed with the economic results of the New Deal. Many of his supporters shared this disappointment. Its failure to achieve full production or eliminate unemployment presented Mr. Willkie with some of his heaviest ammunition, and the same failure, if long continued, is capable at any time of returning the economic conservatives to power. It might easily have done so in this election if the foreign peril had not been present. Needless to say, we should not welcome this result, and we believe the prescription of the conservatives for prosperity is the same old hokum that it always was. The remedy lies in bolder and better calculated measures than the New Deal has undertaken—measures of a sort which might conceivably have been tried if it had not been for the conservative opposition itself.

For the time being, this question is likely to be laid on the shelf by the preparedness program, which, if pursued with sufficient vigor, will do much to expand production and absorb the unemployed. But it will reappear magnified tenfold if and when that program comes to an end. In the long run Mr. Roosevelt has no more important mandate than to plan for, and when the time comes, to apply a carefully planned economic reconstruction for peace and plenty, both in its domestic and its international aspects. He could make no more fatal mistake than to suppose that the New Deal as developed so far has provided the automatic answer to this problem, and to discard it from his mind.

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Editors

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY GEORGE SOULE
STARK YOUNG

Assistant Editors: OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

Contributing Editors

H. N. BRAILSFORD JOHN T. FLYNN E. C. LINDEMAN
JONATHAN MITCHELL R. G. TUGWELL

Treasurer: DANIEL MEBANE

E. G. WOOD BYRON DEXTER
Advertising Manager *Circulation Manager*

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Preparedness: the Lesson of Germany

I HAVE BEEN IN Washington looking at the progress of our national-defense effort, and I am deeply disturbed about it. A great deal is being done; a lot of people are working very hard, some of them probably harder than they should for their own sake or the sake of what they are doing. With some exceptions, I am not questioning the activities within the framework of the given program. What I am questioning is the size and character of the program itself.

Let me begin with a kindergarten statement. Either we are in danger from Hitler or we are not. If we are not, then practically all the money that is being spent and everything else that is being done, including the draft, are a wicked waste. So far as I can see, hardly anybody in the United States still holds the view that the German threat to us is unreal, just something that was whipped up by President Roosevelt for campaign purposes.

Next point: If Hitler is a real menace, we can either give in to him or resist him. While there are some individuals who apparently want to give in, their number is so small that we need not even bother to discuss them.

Well, then: If we intend to resist Hitler, we are wasting time and money and committing slow suicide if we try to meet him with less defense than is necessary to have a reasonable chance (which is to say, a practical certainty) of victory. Question: How much defense do we need? We must not forget that adequate strength is the best possible guarantee that we shall have no war. Hitler has never yet picked on any nation which looked as though it might win.

I don't blame you for being impatient with me at this moment, for complaining that I have only stated the obvious. Obvious it is, yet enormous numbers of people don't seem to see it. They are still talking and thinking as did the British and the French before May tenth of this year. In other words, they feel that we should have some defense, but not enough to interfere with business-as-usual, not enough to upset anybody's life, not enough to make any permanent impress on our habits of thought. If that amount of defense turned out to be too little, they would be sorry, just as a lot of people in France today are sorry. By then, it would be too late, just as it is today in Paris.

We don't want to rush out and provide ten times as much defense as is necessary, any more than we want to provide half as much. What do we in fact require? Our problem is certainly different from that of France or England. Despite the changes in modern warfare, our distance from Europe is still an important factor. Even the military experts disagree among themselves, and are uncertain as to just how big our defensive

force should be, and of what sort. Laymen like myself are still farther from being capable of judging.

But there is a rough benchmark of a sort that we can use. For several years before the beginning of the war, Germany spent at least 30 percent of her total national income (not her government income) on war purposes, and perhaps more. The size of the figure depends upon just what items you include as coming under "national defense." During the same period, Great Britain spent not more than 12 percent of her national income, perhaps as little as 8 or 9 percent. France spent only slightly more than Britain.

If we were to spend on the German scale, we should at present be putting into our armament program close to twenty-five billion dollars annually. Are we getting anywhere near that?

This year's Congress appropriated eight and three-quarter billions for the army, three and a half for the navy and three-quarters of a billion for miscellaneous purposes, in all just over thirteen billions. To this must be added a previous appropriation of four and a half billions for a two-ocean navy, making a total of about seventeen and a half billions. But this of course is not to be expended within one year. Most of the contracts will take three, four or five years. If we assume that they take five years, they would amount to 5 percent of our national income; four years, 6.25 percent; three years, 8.3 percent. Actually, in the month of August, we were spending at the rate which for the year would represent 3.4 percent of our national income. By December we hope to raise this to 6.8 percent and by next June to 10.2 percent.

I am in a position to reveal a most extraordinary piece of news which has a direct bearing on the question of defense and our national economy. I am able to report that the general impression about what has happened in Germany since 1933 is quite false. The commonly accepted notion is that Hitler has built up his vast machine by laying the whip on the backs of the German people, by starving them and otherwise reducing their standard of life to the absolute breaking point. I am not for an instant condoning Hitler. His treatment of his political enemies and of the Jewish community is the blackest page of modern history. His suppression of all civil liberties has turned back the clock of civilization for centuries. But it is not true that the armament program which Hitler himself boasted has cost ninety billion marks was achieved by lowering the German standard of life. On the contrary, the actual real income of the workers of Germany is probably higher than it was in 1933 when Hitler took over, even allowing for larger numbers and price increases. Roughly, the number in-

creased from 1932 to 1938 by 60 percent, while their income increased about 100 percent. To be sure, the 1932 standard was a low one. There was grim poverty in Germany and there still is. Many foodstuffs were scarce, and some of them are still scarce, or rationed, or completely lacking. Nevertheless, the general picture is not one of a steady decline toward the abyss.

This observation is based upon study of the German government's own statistics as to wages, hours, consumption of foodstuffs, and so on. It is possible that these statistics are falsified, but it is not likely that they are grossly garbled. All government statistics nowadays are under suspicion, but the experts who have studied Germany's figures most carefully believe that they are more or less correct. When a situation is not to the liking of Hitler's officials, they do not put out misleading figures; they suppress them altogether.

I do not mean by my statement above that the condition of all classes in Germany has remained static. The poorest workers (not including the Jews, whose condition is an indescribable horror) are better off proportionately than others, as regards the sheer physical necessities of life. (What you may think about a muzzled and blindered totalitarian population is of course another matter.)

How has this seeming miracle been accomplished? By a staggeringly large increase in the national income. To state it very simply, Hitler put all the idle men and machines to work, kept them at work, made them work harder than ever before.

The story is told in the statistics of total national income, expressed here in billions of marks:

1928	75.3
1932	45.1
1933	46.5
1935	58.6
1937	72.5
1938	79.7

The gains in national income here recorded add up to a very sizable amount. If we take 1932 as the base level, the added income each year over 1932, down to 1938, is roughly as follows, in billions of marks:

1932 to 1933	1.4
1932 to 1934	7.5
1932 to 1935	13.5
1932 to 1936	19.5
1932 to 1937	27.4
1932 to 1938	34.6

This total of 103.9 billions easily permits Hitler's boasted expenditure on armament of ninety billion marks and still leaves a handsome surplus for other purposes. As a matter of fact, Hitler's statement also included 1939, by which time the gain in national income may easily have been very much larger still.

During this rise, the workers did not quite obtain their proportionate share of the total. A study recently made by Dr. Otto Nathan of New York University, to which I am indebted for much of this material, indicates that the workers' share declined by about three percent and the share of the entrepreneur increased proportionately. Since Hitler's whole propaganda says that National Socialism is a wonderful thing for the laboring class, it is unlikely that he would permit statistics to be published supporting this conclusion if it were not correct.

The astonishing, never told story of what happened in Germany goes something like this:

When Hitler came to power, his first act was to increase employment by made work. He did not suffer the handicap of conservative public opinion as the United States did in facing a similar problem at about the same time; he was not forced to find means of employment that failed to compete with private enterprise. On the contrary, he could use his workers at whatever he thought best, and what he thought best was preparation for war. This went off into numerous activities: strategic military roads, new airports, shipyards and drydocks; but wherever it went, Hitler followed. In a few cases, he instituted government-owned and operated activities, but on the whole, he gave war orders to existing private firms, and these increased their staffs and sopped up unemployment thereby. When these firms did not have sufficient funds for extension of plant, the government loaned them the money in a roundabout way somewhat as the RFC is doing for American firms with war orders.

People not only went back to work, but everyone worked harder than before. (Some were in labor camps as virtual prisoners.) Under Hitler's incessant drive, hours were lengthened. In most cases they were slightly longer than those of 1929, and very much beyond those of 1932. Only rarely were they so increased that productivity was impaired. Elderly mechanics were brought back to their machines; handicapped people were given tasks fitted to their abilities. The percentage of women workers to men, which at first declined a little, soon increased. Hitler had begun his regime with a burst of magniloquent propaganda that woman's place is in the kitchen, when she isn't in the hospital delivery room. He did this to try to make jobs for unemployed men; previous German governments have done the same thing. As unemployment among the men dropped, Hitler changed his tune. The distinct inferiority of the female continued to be part of the Nazi philosophy, but every woman able to work was sucked out of the home and into the factory.

To return to the chronological account: having ended unemployment and indeed created a situation where there was an actual shortage of workers, Hitler proceeded to increase the total plant capacity of Germany by a huge amount. Naturally, war industry came

first, not only in orders given and money loaned but in priorities for raw materials. Existing plant was modernized and expanded. Machines were worked as many hours in the day as was possible. (In the increased productivity, technological advance played a comparatively small part. There had been an enormous improvement between 1929 and 1932, during the blackest years of the depression, but little thereafter.)

For his own special purposes, Hitler instituted a genuine planned economy which, while it certainly should not be imitated as a whole, was efficient for those special purposes. All capital investment throughout Germany was under government supervision and was forbidden if it ran counter to the general purposes of the regime. Waste of every kind was fought vigorously. Hitler was spending the whole force and energy of his nation on preparation for blitzkrieg.

Would the German economy collapse if the war effort were to end either with a defeat or with a victory? It might, but this is by no means certain. While the element of private profit still continues and the entrepreneur has been protected and maintained in his function, though on a somewhat reduced scale, Germany has retained enough power over the economic life of the country so that she could make a quick shift from one kind of activity to another. If the war were to end tomorrow, leaving Hitler and his system still in power, there is no reason why the same energies that went into building battleships and tanks should not go into building houses and roads and parks. The morale of a people can without doubt be raised to a somewhat higher level by confronting them with the real or imaginary danger of external attack; but any nation at any time has high enough morale to prefer prosperity to unemployment and starvation. Quite aside from the inhuman barbarism of Hitler's regime, his policy of putting everyone to work, whether private business was prepared to carry the load or not, is a sound one that might well be copied everywhere. After all, there is a certain amount of cruelty involved in the alternative system of keeping people unemployed over long periods of time either with no help or with limited public or private charity.

The lesson of all this for the American armament program should be plain enough for all. As a cold matter of fact, we are now doing in this country many of the things on the economic and industrial front that Hitler did in 1933, 1934 and thereafter. I only hope that we can learn our lesson to the full. We must realize that when Goering talked about "guns or butter" he was lying as usual. In Germany, certain imported products were sacrificed in order to bring in needed raw materials for war; but in the broad way in which Goering's phrase is usually applied, it is just nonsense. You don't need to choose between guns and butter; in fact, the surest way to get the best guns and

enough of them is to furnish plenty of butter at the same time. Here are some striking statistics showing Germany's consumption of certain products per person per year, in kilograms:

	1932	1938
Butter	7.5	8.8
Lard	8.5	8.4
Margarine	11.3	8.7

Off-hand, it would seem that the butter-eating people did better and the margarine-eating people did worse, unless you assume that some people shifted from margarine to butter. However, these figures must all be read with great caution; for one thing, they include foodstuffs stored as well as those consumed.

The American national income is at present about seventy billion dollars. Under the impetus of war orders, plus whatever natural recovery may be taking place from other causes, it will probably go up to eighty billions within the next year. There is no reason on earth why it should not rise to one hundred billions in the near future. If we will plan our economic life as intelligently in the interest of democracy as Hitler planned Germany's in the interest of Nazism and war, we can have our armaments—all we need of them. We can have a genuine improvement of our economy, the scrapping of obsolete and obsolescent machinery, an expansion of plant to fill all reasonable needs, a standard of living for the whole country that is now available only to the favored few. BRUCE BLIVEN

Flight of the Heart

Heart, my heart, what will you do?
There are five lame dogs and one deaf-mute
All of them with demands on you.

I will build myself a copper tower
With four ways out and no way in
But mine the glory, mine the power.

And what if the tower should shake and fall
With three sharp taps and one big bang?
What would you do with yourself at all?

I would go in the cellar and drink the dark
With two quick sips and one long pull,
Drunk as a lord and gay as a lark.

But what when the cellar roof caves in
With one blue flash and nine old bones?
How, my heart, will you save your skin?

I will go back where I belong
With one foot first and both eyes blind;
I will go back where I belong
In the fore-being of mankind.

LOUIS MACNEICE

"Somewhere in Europe"

THOSE who were fortunate enough to escape from the grip of fascism in Europe are constantly getting letters from stranded friends. Out of their pages come the burned smell of bombed cities, the heavy atmosphere of internment camps, the panic of evacuations, the heroism of hope. In some distant future, novelists and historians interested in our time may find their most valuable information in the "literature of letters" of our period. I am sure that in autobiographical works of our generation there will be many chapters on "letters in exile," many stories about the letters we used to write and get while on our "exile journey." I know that in our later talks around the peaceful fireplaces of our liberated home countries we will remember the letters which we read and reread and gave to others to read until they were thumbed and tattered.

In the following paragraphs I will quote a few of many letters sent from somewhere in Western continental Europe. Their authors are professional writers. But their adventures and hardships are not exceptional, they are part of the general fate of anti-Fascist refugees in Western Europe.

A German woman writes on the eve of the evacuation of Paris:

The trees in our garden are so wonderful. The sky is blue. Even when the bombers come over, you hardly can believe that it is war. But it is. I think we must go away tomorrow. There are no trains. We have no car. We will simply put on our rucksacks and walk.

The children are sweet. The boy is helping me very much. He was always so nervous, you remember. But now he is courageous and cold-blooded and very skillful. He feels he's the man of the family. And the girl is very nice too. She hides when she weeps because of her father. In my presence she always tries to seem happy (with tears just under the surface of her eyes).

They went to school until the very last days. Can you imagine what it means to wait for them during an air-raid alarm? What a difference, what a terrible difference between life observed as a writer and life lived as a mother.

I hope you will hear from me sometime in the future.

A seventy-five-year-old German scholar fled from the Nazi-occupied zone to Southern France. He writes:

It rains. I am sitting in a barrack with many other refugees. Nothing to buy. I am entirely reduced to a vegetative life. A plate of hot soup, a bit of bread and the friendly glance of some one who passes by . . . that's all I want at this minute. I made the first part of the way almost barefoot. Then I got a pair of shoes. Finally a truck picked me up.

In another letter some days later:

I now realize that one can live with a minimum of comfort, almost like a beast, but only if one has the hope that it is transitory and that "the sun will rise again."

A rabbi helped me on the way from Paris to A. Then a worker picked me up and gave me some food. There is still humanity. Imagine that I met R. and H. You know that both are half-paralyzed? And I myself half-blind? Isn't it like the fable of the blind and the paralyzed? What strength there is in life!

In the camp of Le Vernet (which was not opened to allow prisoners to escape) some hundreds of German, Austrian, Czech, Italian and Spanish anti-Fascists are kept "indefinitely." Nazi commissions have visited the camp and investigated some of the prisoners. A famous writer—prisoner in Le Vernet—writes:

The spirit continues to be excellent. But the strain is terrible. Can you imagine what it means to live with the rope around one's neck?

We try to work, however. I think Le Vernet will enter the history of literature with some remarkable plays, novels, stories and poems. By the way, our latest song is "The Elegy of the Last Bit of Soap." It is a real elegy: do not be fooled by the humor. We are all terribly worried about the fate of F.'s children. They were in Paris with her mother; the father is here. The mother was killed by a German bomb. The children are in a hospital. Nothing could help us more than to hear that the children are safe in America. Try to help these children first.

From a young Austrian woman who waits for her visa in a village of the unoccupied zone of France:

It is a strange life that we live here, gray and monotonous and full of excitement, however, in spite of the monotony. . . . Oh, the letters from America with the nice stamps! They are like modern angels coming from the skies. I read my letters every once in a while and I laugh and weep in reading them. What a wonderful feeling that there are friends who do not forget you. I don't think we should have survived without this great consolation. . . . Twice a week the library is open. It is very small, this poor little library in this nest of French provincial life, but it is my bit of paradise on earth in these times. Voltaire, Zola, Balzac, Montaigne, Michelet, Stendhal, Rabelais become companions of our otherwise vegetable existence. What a joy! I found also a book of Anatole France which I read some years ago, "Les Dieux Ont Soif." Reading it again, I was delighted. There have been terrible times in the past and they were followed by victories of freedom and humanity.

A Polish writer got out of France. Here is an excerpt from his letter written aboard a ship:

I always think it is only a dream. We crossed the Pyrenees on a stormy night. If I were to describe this night in a

novel the readers would call me a fantastic and romantic writer.

The strongest impression was the friendly attitude of the people in Spain. I felt I was in an anti-Fascist country under foreign occupation.

I happened to meet your friend X, the editor of the famous Y. He had to bring his old father over the border. He succeeded in doing so. His father is over seventy-five, his child about seven. What a picture! A grandfather and a grandchild crossing a mountain border in the night, going from one country of exile to another!

From somewhere in Southern France a French writer—exiled within his own country—sent the following letter:

I was in the famous Flanders trap. I lived through the evacuation of Dunkerque. Two days in England. Then back to France. Fighting on the Somme front. Two months without a letter from my wife. She was in Paris the day the Nazis came. But she managed to escape to Bordeaux. Finally I managed to let her know that I was alive. She had to flee from Bordeaux. At that time I was with the Armée de la Loire. She then looked for my division on the roads and finally found me. It sounds like a movie story, doesn't it?

Now we are living here. I have quite white hair and the Croix de Guerre—an old veteran. But I know the world is round and turns. I am writing poetry and waiting, and I still believe in God.

Besides Le Vernet, there are other camps in the unoccupied zone. One of them is the women's camp at Rieucros. A letter from there reads:

As yet only women who have a visa for the Western Hemisphere have been released from the camp. Now they are releasing women who ask for the protection of the Reich. The Nazi women did so some months ago, but now even some refugees have done the same because they have seen no other way out. I would never do so. I do not want their pity.

Today, I see a new possibility of getting out. As you know, my husband was a "*prestataire*" with the British army in France. He is demobilized and lives near by. I could get out of the camp and live in a little town as "*résidence désignée*" if some person or organization would guarantee a sum of 1,000-1,500 francs a month.

Surely you can imagine what it would mean. It is not only a moral question. I have just left the hospital as skinny as Gandhi, and I do not know how to live through the coming winter in these drafty barracks, with nights full of crying women and terrible rats running over the faces of the people on the straw, with soup which becomes thinner and thinner.

Oh, yes, I could tell you stories. I think the months of May, June and July were the strangest experience I have lived through. It was grotesque and terrible to be behind barbed wire and see the events of the French catastrophe from such a perspective. For weeks I had no news from my husband. God knows how he got through all the horrors of the retreat. But he is alive, and that gives me the *élan de vivre*.

Letters are the only bright news in the camp. Write me again and again.

And from one who thought he could not bear the life of an exile any longer:

Still I hope. I am sick. I have no money. But the worst is this isolation from my friends. I have worked on a new novel. But is there any sense in writing? Still I write. Sometimes I dream that it is all a dream.

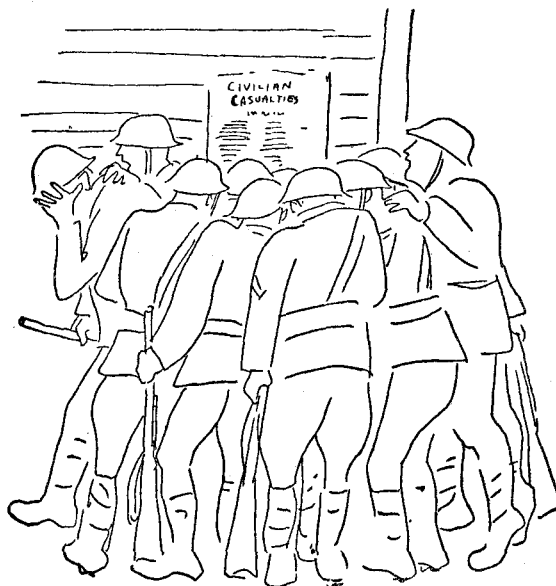
The author of this letter was Ernst Weiss, famous novelist, winner of the Olympia Prize for Literature. He was on the list of outstanding refugee intellectuals expecting American visas. Friends in Hollywood got him a contract with a movie studio. Tickets were ready at Marseilles. He had not the strength to flee from Paris. He remained there. For years he carried a little box of poison in his pocket. Once when he showed it to us, he said, "They will not get me alive." Now news comes from France that he committed suicide. They did not get him alive.

Here is an excerpt from the letter of a young German who only began to write when he was in exile:

I am still sick. I was in a camp and had to chop trees. My hand was broken. When the German army approached we were all put into a train. We called it the ghost train. Several hundred anti-Nazis in a train heading for the south of France through a zone that should be occupied by the Germans. Once we were cut off by two columns of motorized German troops, but finally we escaped. I tried to make notes all the time. I remembered our friend K, who kept his diary in the World War even in the trenches. I hope I may be able to write everything down. Others have to learn from our experiences.

Finally, one more letter. The author is a Czechoslovak:

So that's my third escape and I am afraid that it is not the last one. I had to make a nice round trip through Northern Africa, using a rowboat in the sea, and so on.



I am always amazed at our strength. What we can endure! If we survive, we will surely go back home and be happy when Adolf is nothing more than a buried spectre.

I have not mentioned those parts of the letters dealing with a matter common to all refugee letters, namely, descriptions of the trials in getting visas or extensions of permits to stay, with requests for money

and affidavits, with the philosophy of waiting and the struggle against the wall of red tape and immigration restrictions. I have only tried to give a picture of the spirit of those who are still holding in their hands the future of the true culture of European countries, temporarily covered with the shadow of fascist barbarism.

F. C. WEISKOPF

Two Eighteenth-Century Careers

I. *Benjamin Franklin*¹

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, an immensely precocious, immensely industrious, immensely curious young man, not quite turned nineteen, who had already acquired an uncanny knack for landing with his nose in the butter, arrived in London for the first time the day before Christmas, 1724, after a rough passage on the ship *London Hope*. With him went James Ralph, a poetical friend who was walking out on a wife and child and on the colonial small-town life of Philadelphia to make a career among the theatres and coffee-houses and the full-bottomed literary wigs of Augustan London. They had gone on board as steerage passengers, but young Franklin's engaging manner had won them an invitation up to the cabin. There they occupied the berths and ate the choice stores that had been put on board for a famous admiralty lawyer who was prevented at the last minute from sailing. During the long chilly days of rolling and pitching over the wintry sea Franklin made the acquaintance and won the esteem of a Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant who had made his pile in America and was on his way back to pay off the creditors he had left behind

him in England. Ralph was setting out full of high-flown hopes of climbing into preferment and place on an endless ladder of heroic couplets, but Franklin was bound on less exalted business. He was on his way to London to buy types and presses with which to set up a publishing house under the protection and partnership of Governor Keith of Pennsylvania. As he supposed, and as the Governor had assured him, letters of recommendation to literary men and friends of that amiable but crack-brained functionary's were in the ship's mail-bag when she sailed. They were to establish his credit and put him on the smooth London road.

As it turned out, both the young men's hopes of London went up in smoke the first winter; Franklin didn't make his fortune, but in the eighteen months he spent in the capital of the growing commercial empire, working for his living as a printer and learning the methods and styles of the best shops, he soaked up a surprising amount of the intellectual spirit of the Augustan Age.

The London the two young Americans saw and smelt and heard about them when they first stretched across the muddy cobbles legs that still felt light from the straining and heaving of the ship, was already the great capital, the *urbs et orbis* of eighteenth-century England. It was a foggy, crowded city of clattering lanes and narrow streets, opening here and there into smooth-paved courts and pumpyards and into the new great squares flanked by façades in the very personal style which Sir Christopher Wren had a generation before worked up out of memories of Palladio and Vitruvius. The green-brown Thames, cut across by the difficult barrier of London Bridge that divided the barges and wherries of the upcountry river traffic from the seagoing fleets of the crowded tidal estuary, was still the main artery of the city. Like taxi drivers today, the sharp-tongued watermen who ferried passengers from bank to bank and up and down the stream were the carriers of the gossip and wisecracks of the town. But hackney coaches were already multiplying, and passable thoroughfares were opening to link the wharves and exchanges of the City with the shops

¹ This is the first of two articles dealing with Benjamin Franklin and Daniel Defoe—a chapter from a book about American history which Mr. Dos Passos describes as follows: "The volume will probably be called 'The Ground We Stand On,' with some sort of subtitle such as 'Setting the American Bent,' and deals with the divergence of a specifically American from a late English way of living. The idea is that they both branched from the main stem of English thought and culture, at the time of the ruin of the Commonwealth. The urban Commonwealth spirit went on developing in the New England towns, while the country-gentleman republicanism which played such an important part in seventeenth-century England survived in Low Church Virginia. The two traditions fused again in the American Revolution. Meanwhile, Britain was turning into an oligarchic empire, in which the Puritan middle class was encysted in a sort of ghetto. Highly energized by the pressure, a continual stream of population (types as various as Tom Paine and Samuel Insull) was siphoned into America, where they found a congenial world of commercial opportunity. The cowardly provincialism of American thought after the Civil War managed to obscure the fact that it was really the major branch of the great Anglo-Saxon tradition that had taken root in America. The book will treat specifically of Roger Williams and his time (the rise and fall of English republicanism), with the rise of the eighteenth-century business man, with Jefferson's architectural dream of a Greco-Roman republic, with the career of a typically American citizen of the world: Joel Barlow; and will end with the first check of oligarchic ideals in America, as exemplified by the collapse of Alexander Hamilton's bid for power.

and promenades and royal residences and the new town houses of the rich and powerful that were building beyond Westminster and Hyde Park. Seaward and landward along the Thames and on the heights of Hampstead the very special life of the London suburbs had begun.

Although the population of England was only something like eight millions, nearly one-tenth of it was crowded into the great seaport city. Franklin already knew three towns: the huddles of tiny brick buildings along wharves that then were Boston and New York and the amply spread out squares of Philadelphia, where the houses opened their back doors on quiet orchards and kitchen gardens; but London, where the close-packed houses spread for miles hemming in grimy docks packed with ships and spars and spiderweb tackle, must have seemed marvelous to him. The streets were full of racket of huge-wheeled carts and coaches, and clattered with horses' hooves and rang with the cries of hucksters, fishwives, oyster women, apple sellers, boys yelling papers and almanacks and running after gentlemen to shine their shoes. There were few sidewalks as yet, but in the better streets big stone posts protected those on foot from the wheels that squodged through mud and streaming gutters, and from the jostling of porters bowed under heavy loads or of strapping fellows in livery carrying people of means around in sedan chairs. Fops and elegants when they walked carried long silver-pommeled canes to help them over the uneven pavements. Women protected their dresses with hoods and cloaks from the mud and clattered along on wooden pattens. The crowds were full of streetwalkers and pickpockets. At night respectable people went out with misgivings after leaving their valuables at home. Holdups were frequent as few streets were lighted. A vast criminal network was much more actively organized than the police, under gang leaders like the famous Jonathan Wilde. The days of the mohawks, nickers and scourers were not quite over. The only protection for the citizen who went out without his own band of chairmen and link-boys was the watch. The watchmen with their pikes and long cloaks went through the streets in huddled groups and shook their lanterns from corner to corner to call for help when they needed it. Around the waterfront dives, press gangs kidnaped seamen for the royal navy. It was a raw tough city where dog eat dog was the law.

The young hopefuls took lodgings at three and sixpence a week in the ant hill's very center, in Little Britain, and began to look about them. When it dawned on Ben Franklin that Governor Keith's backing had been all talk and that he had sent him no letters of recommendation at all, he went around to Palmer's famous shop in Bartholomew Close and got himself a job as a compositor. Poor Ralph, stage-

struck and full of confidence in his talents, managed to obtain an interview with Mr. Wilks, the famous actor at Drury Lane, but was advised by that worthy to keep off the boards at all costs. Then he tried to get a publisher to set him up as editor of a weekly that would outdo *The Spectator* and, failing that, to get work as a hack writer or copying documents at the Temple, but it was no use. In the course of his pursuit of the muses, however, he contrived to get himself an attractive mistress, a girl who kept a millinery shop in the Cloisters. Between them they helped Ben spend all the money he was saving up for his passage home, making the rounds evenings of amusement places and coffee and chocolate houses and theatres. In the first months the free life of the great city so appealed to Ben that he wrote Deborah Read (the girl he was engaged to and whom a few years later he married) warning her that it might be a long time before he was back in Philadelphia. The implication was that he might not come back at all. As the young Americans had been brought up in a land where the stage was considered the very anteroom of hell, it was natural that their main pleasure was in going to the play.

The theatre of the reign of wheezy George I of Hanover and his two fat mistresses was the theatre of the Restoration in its waning. The imperative middle-class conscience of England, dormant since the death of Prynne, had already risen up in the censorious form of Jeremy Collier, and in the powerful societies for the reformation of manners; but the Licensing Act that was so to inhibit the growth of the English stage had not yet passed Parliament. The great masters of the comedy of manners had long since disappeared. Etherage and Wycherley and Farquhar were dead. The versatile architect Vanbrugh's last works were on the boards. Congreve had given up writing and retired to the country.

The comedy of manners had depended on the willingness of brash court wits to laugh at their own vices. But in the court of George I the King didn't understand either the English language or an English joke. The theatre, more and more dependent on middle-class patronage, was slowly running down under the suave rule of Colley Cibber and his family. It was becoming largely a theatre of revivals, adaptations, translations. A great deal of it stemmed from Molière. After seventy-five years, Shakespeare had come back to life, rewritten to suit the modern taste by Dryden and by Cibber himself. As the playhouse broadened its scope to appeal to the City rather than the Court, the plays tended to lose energy and freshness, but the stage was still the living bridge between the working and trading population of London and the closed circles of the court and the government. Looking up from the pit or down from among the gods of the gallery, young Franklin and his poetical friend could see face to face the world of power and rank. It was some-

what later that the middle-class censors were to drape veils of decorum over England until no man's right hand knew what his left hand was doing.

To a curious young man from the colonies, avid for discussion, information and discovery, the coffee houses and taverns of London were the next great attraction. There men of wit and reputation, indeed all kinds of men, went to meet their friends and to talk. The clubs of the London coffee houses were like the *tertulias* that survived up into our own time in the cafés of Madrid. Men went there to show themselves and see who was to be seen and to expound and to listen. While they waited for their friends, they read the daily papers and the reviews and the news letters.

A good deal of a man's life was still spent in public places. Englishmen of that day were not yet sealed up into their castes and categories. The Englishman's home was not the tight shell it later became, to which he scuttled back after work as touchily bent on privacy as a hermit crab. Even though the brilliant days of Will's and of Queen Anne were over, strangers were taken first thing to the coffee houses to look at and, if they were lucky, to listen to the Augustan great.

The great they saw, it is true, were the great of a second generation. Addison had obtained preferment and place and the Countess of Warwick, and had died. Steele was coming to the end of his gay career paralyzed and broke in a Welsh farmhouse. Swift was living in bitter exile in his Dublin deanery. Pope, the little, sickly, spider-shaped man whose sting was always ready for friend or foe, still lurked in his garden at Twickenham, undisputed master of the realms of gold, but was rarely seen in London.

The piping times had gone by when a well balanced set of verses, nicely dedicated to a cabinet minister or a royal mistress, could make a young man's fortune. The tone of talk in the coffee houses was more metaphysical than literary or political. A generation that stemmed from Hobbes and Locke was trying to estimate human conduct on a purely material basis. The deists were at work taking Christianity away from the clergy and turning religion into a simple reverence for a First Cause. The notion of the existence of natural laws, like Newton's law of gravitation, that a man could try out for himself, was superseding the intense otherworldly imperatives of the last century. The Church of England, reestablished on Laud's model, had weathered the high-church reaction, but had come out rather the worldly instrument of government than a supernatural institution. The divine authority that Laud had dreamed of vesting in the king had become diffused through the whole class of land-owning gentry. As long as people paid their tithes and occasionally gave the parson a glass of port, the church cared less and less about what they thought. A flat and rather sordid but thoroughly sound common sense was the keynote of the time. Only gradually, as the century grew older,

were some layers of its thought to become soaked with the hot passion for justice of the humanitarian reformers.

Franklin went often to Batson's Coffeehouse in the hope of some day seeing Sir Isaac Newton, who was spending his last years in the quiet post of Master of the Mint, but never got a glimpse of him. He did meet Dr. Mandeville, a Dutch physician who was the Mencken of the day and whose "The Fable of the Bees" was immensely popular at the time, and Sir Hans Sloane, the explorer and botanist and popularizer of quinine. He sold Sir Hans a purse made of asbestos he'd brought with him from America, and was invited to his house in Bloomsbury Square to see his collection of curios.

But mostly young Ben associated with printers, mechanics, old ladies in lodging houses, chance acquaintances of the street and tavern. Ready as any sponge to absorb everything essential he touched, he didn't need to sit across the table from the great masters themselves. The style they had invented was everywhere; the neat jocular verse and the cool prose based on the cadences of conversation rather than on the boom and bluster of pulpit oratory pervaded the smoky air of the city. The streets Ben walked in were the streets of Gay's Trivia. The groups in the coffee houses were the Club out of *The Spectator*. Events in the world of power were flavored with the sharp, partisan bitterness of Swift's pamphlets. The Augustan pomposities of the classical past that Dryden had set up like stage scenery at the end of every vista were focused sharp and clear and small by the diminishing lens of Pope's precise and narrow mind. It is not surprising that in these eighteen months Franklin's writing lost the routine provincial sound of his boyish journalism and that he went home to Philadelphia with one of the simplest and most direct-from-the-lips English styles ever written.

Franklin's school of writing was the playhouse and the reviews and the bookstalls, where he found second-hand the works of the generation just drawing to a close. From the Augustans he caught the habit of taking for granted a republic of letters, universal brotherhood of brains, curiosity, discovery, which had been implicit in the best works of the age, and which remained the framework of his thought and behavior during all his long career of influencing all classes and types of men. The attitude gave scope to the unfenced openness of mind he was somehow to transmit to generations of Americans.

During his eighteen months in London Ben made considerable impression among the printers he worked with by his mechanical skill, his physical strength, his frugal habits and hard work, but they shook their heads at the pert freedom of his conversation on matters human and divine. In his spare time he printed up

a number of copies of a small pamphlet, which he was rather ashamed of in later life, called "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," embodying in a set of paradoxes the materialistic ideas which, sprouting from Hobbes and Locke and the disillusioned writers of the Restoration, were the commonplaces of the bolder coffee-house wits of the day. London in the early eighteenth century was in a debunking frame of mind. Already backtalk at the droning authority of the pulpit had been part of the atmosphere of his brother James's newspaper in Boston, daily in revolt against the voice of God as interpreted by the Mathers. In the comparative freedom of London, Ben was able to meet this train of thought at the source and to get over the greensickness of "Main Street" rebellion. In its place appeared a broad tolerance of the views and opinions of others and that active and passionate curiosity to examine the world at hand and to prove whatever can be proved about it by direct and personal experiment that is the basis of the scientific method. The ground had been cleared for new ways of thinking.

When he gave up hope of getting work in the capital, James Ralph lit off for the country and got himself a miserably paid job teaching school in a village in Berkshire. He left his pretty milliner more or less dependent on Ben, to whom he already owed quite a sum of money. From his village, where he went under Franklin's name so as not to demean his own, instead of remittances he sent Franklin by every mail sections of an epic poem he was writing. Ben, who was rearranging his life on the theory that man was the measure of all things, and who very much needed a woman, started to make love to the pretty milliner: after all, he was supporting her and he was a thrifty fellow. The milliner wrote Ralph about it and Ralph, stung because Ben appreciated his verses too little and his girl friend too much, broke off their friendship and said that furthermore Ben's behavior had canceled the debt between them, which by that time amounted to twenty-seven pounds sterling.

Ben changed his lodgings and got a job in a different printing house, but after his row with Ralph he began to feel homesick for the fresh air of Philadelphia. In England all he had to look forward to was the slummy life of London and work for low wages in somebody else's shop. Among his other attainments he had made quite a stir among the young men about town by his skill as a swimmer, and a friend suggested that the two of them go abroad and bum their way around the continent teaching swimming to noble-men's sons. Ben was about to take him up, when Mr. Denham, the Quaker merchant he had met on the London Hope, offered him a job clerking in a new store he was going to set up in Philadelphia. Ben jumped at the chance to make a little money and sailed with Mr. Denham for home.

This is how he sums up his gains during that period in London in the autobiography he wrote years later, again in England, by that time a rich and famous man, the diplomatic agent of his colony, during a vacation at the liberal Bishop of St. Asaph's country house:

Thus I spent about eighteen months in London: most part of the time I worked hard at my business, and spent but little upon myself except in seeing plays and in books. . . . I had by no means improved my fortune; but I had picked up some very ingenious acquaintance, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably.

The all too brief journal Franklin kept of his trip home on the Berkshire is the first example we have of the clear, cool, selfless, faintly amused style of writing that is the making of his autobiography and of his letters. Instead of the raw youth who had wangled his way into the cabin on the London Hope, the Ben Franklin who came back from London on the Berkshire was the Franklin the world was gradually to get to know: Mr. Franklin, the enquiring merchant and mechanic, who never took himself quite seriously, canny in the ways of the world, understanding the uses of money and respectability without ever being quite won by them; Dr. Franklin, the philosopher, the ingenious amateur who loved to tinker with scientific appliances and with metaphysical notions and droll rhymes and sayings, who out of his keen inspection, quite uncolored by egoism, of the men and women around him, of the weather, and thunder clouds and ocean currents, of forces of nature and mechanical contraptions, managed slowly through his long life to build himself up into one of the epic figures of his time, the *bourgeois gentilhomme* who was to set his stamp on the whole American nation.

JOHN DOS PASSOS

Poem for Use

Let us believe in the flesh, the hope made flesh,
For the soul is an exile without rest,
And the brain is a pack of apes in flight,
And the heart of the world is breaking in every
breast.

Let us honor the flesh with faith extreme.
See, on this vicious day, how the brave blood,
How the frail racial bone, the mysterious marrow
Would fill with life the rotten sons of God.
Though death has overrun our desperate walls
And panic has us in a corner, cold,
Do hope, do cling: by the great atom, by the cell,
By the black centuries already old,
By the bright skull hid in the living face,
By the five-pointed magic of the hand,
Flesh, that pale prophet that survives all fates,
Will, if it matters, make a more human race.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER

Parliament in Action

EVERY AMERICAN knows what England has been doing for the past few months. But I wonder how many know what England's Parliament has been doing, what its functions and duties have been.

The answer is that in the last three months Parliament has been as busy as any body in the country. It has asked Ministers of the day nearly 4,000 questions; it has entrusted the executive with dictatorial powers over industry, agriculture, labor, the Press and the liberty of the subject. Hundreds of hours of debate have been concerned with safeguarding these powers and correcting abuses. A budget has been passed which included a purchase tax and a new method of collecting income tax from a wider catchment area.

I find three main themes revealed by this parliament: increased equality of sacrifice and complete mobilization of man-power, reform of the Civil Service and, third, all that is involved in the problem of individual liberty. A bold and balanced approach to these problems is essential to victory.

The first question involves economic policy, priority organization, effects of the purchase tax, pay and allowances for soldiers and civilians, rationing and communal feeding, free milk and family allowances, justice for the new depressed areas, etc. Two business men, Sir Andrew Duncan and Lord Woolton, have turned out to be the best of Mr. Chamberlain's appointments; but the House is skeptical of committees and boards, and awaits enlightenment on a number of practical points. A member for a Lancashire division said in debate: "There is something wrong with a war which places so heavy a burden on the nation, when one family carries so large a share of it and the other so small a part . . . it is unfair that [civilian workers] should be so much better off than in pre-war days, while other families are so much worse off because their boys have been called up."

The second question affects the Civil Service, the machinery of government. War has only hastened long due reforms. Attacks on the civil servant are often unfair, because his conduct is based on a leisurely peacetime pace, often affected by confusion, lack of policy, and weak and inexperienced Ministers. Nevertheless, government machinery needs spring cleaning. It is bad enough that effective power resides with 1,300 administrative grade officers (out of half a million civil servants) recruited from a narrow class of highly successful examinees. But more important just now are the antiquated business methods, inadequate devolution of responsibility, inattention to policy formation, exaggerated departmentalism and over-detailed Treasury control. The War Office is a notorious example and has baffled three successive young Ministers. Hope lies in the fact that there are scores of men from business, the universities, the professions, literature—some of the ablest young men in this coun-

try—now inside government offices. The relation between government and industry, the social services, and public opinion will never be the same again. In future it will not be enough for Parliament to expose mal-administration: it must demand a systematic overhaul such as Lord Beaverbrook has obtained in one particular department.

Third, there is the question of liberty of the subject and public opinion. It is no accident that Parliament has spent so much time on refugees and aliens, detention of private citizens, the Swinton Committee, the Silent Column, Cooper's Snoopers, etc. Nor that outspoken members, including at least five university representatives, have figured in these controversies, often disagreeing with one another, but challenging authority in the name of some threatened liberty.

The Prime Minister recently authorized Sir Archibald Sinclair to state that a basically free Parliament and press would be preserved and all extraordinary powers would be restored with victory and peace. That assurance was needed. Nobody wishes to nag—some freedoms must be surrendered in wartime—but the preservation of others is part of the very objects and aims of the war. An open-eyed democracy will not tolerate traitors, profiteers, or muddleheaded departments. It suspects censorship and secret committees; it ignores those who talk of "morale" and "columns"; it would be angry if it knew that attempts were made to keep Mr. Priestley off the radio. It will give gladly for Spitfires; it will form a people's army in two months; but it wants accurate information quickly; it wants music, recreation and more equality of sacrifice.

Parliament more and more will reflect that mood. Public opinion may change, but Parliament must be sensitive and responsive to changes. It must be close enough to the executive to ventilate grievances and to safeguard liberties. France is our warning and example.

So we come back full-circle to the war itself. Now home front and war front are one and indivisible. A clearer definition of our intentions will not only affect the shape of our changing society, it will itself be one of the instruments of ultimate success. Obviously the Prime Minister must be guarded in his utterances, but it may be the next task of a free Parliament to show how a disciplined democracy can take the diplomatic offensive. This may involve radical changes in the Foreign Office, a central department of war propaganda, bolder declarations about international economic organizations and the restoration of liberty in Europe. The recent statement by the Prime Minister on Anglo-American coöperation may well rank as a historical declaration, and greater force was given to it by the unusual and telling peroration of his speech: "Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days."

London

KENNETH LINDSAY, M.P.

Washington Notes

When Big Bill Stamps

ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC happenings of the campaign was President Roosevelt's offer in his Boston speech, of twenty thousand planes to England. Behind it was an extraordinary episode. If I am correctly informed, the offer was possible simply because Mr. William S. Knudsen, head of the NDAC, took a notion to meet informally in Detroit with a few of his colleagues in the automobile industry, and suggest that they arrange to overthrow the Hitlerian empire. It gives you a thought-provoking picture of big business's power.

Last September, after the first rush of contract-letting was over, Mr. Knudsen and the head of the Army Air Corps, General Arnold, made a painstaking inspection of the country's airplane plants. Mr. Knudsen was born and raised in Denmark: he bows from the hips when he shakes hands and has a great deal of Europe's formal courtesy of manner. At each of the airplane plants visited, he said the expected words of praise. But—despite the present deep mumness of NDAC officials—there is reason to think he was anything but satisfied.

When you think about it, you realize that Mr. Knudsen has a peculiar place in his generation. He isn't a technician, an engineer; he is merely a manager, a super straw boss. But he is a super straw boss in the automobile industry, the like of which has never existed before and today exists only in America. He is one of a few hundred living men who have been bred to think not in terms of machinery, but machinery to make machinery. And, if my information may be trusted, he looked on the airplane manufacturers as an Eagle Scout might look on a cub.

The fate of the world, it is agreed, depends on mastery of the air over Europe. Our present NDAC airplane program, calling for 36,000 planes by 1942, about half of which will go to Britain, was decided on only after the most delicate calculations of our General Staff, after agonizing conferences between Secretary Morgenthau and the British Purchasing Mission. It was appropriated for by Congress on the official understanding that it represented the utmost effort of the nation.

I am informed that Mr. Knudsen returned from his airplane-factory inspection, and relapsed into quiet meditation, surrounded by bundles of blueprints. When he decided to act, what did he do? Without much more than a sad, courteous smile to army, navy, the administration or the British, he went freelancing off to Detroit. Mr. Knudsen was once production man for Ford; the Ford men are his friends. So are the General Motors men; he was General Motors president when he became NDAC Commissioner. And Mr. Keller of Chrysler is one of his warmest admirers. Mr. Knudsen summoned his colleagues of the esoteric mysteries of mass production to meet with him, and they determined to make a bum out of Marshal Goering.

My knowledge of mass-production principles is something less than my knowledge of the Aztec quetzal, but—with prompting from my informants—I think I can explain where Mr. Knudsen's genius lies. No American air-

plane company has yet made a thousand planes of the same design, or anything like that number. Let us say that there is an operation in the manufacture of a plane that takes a day of a workman's time, and costs \$10. A machine to perform that operation could be built by a machine-tool company at a cost of \$12,000, and wouldn't be worth it. But in the automobile industry, it is hard to think of any machine, no matter how vast, complicated and expensive, that doesn't add to profits. American automobile men instinctively think in terms of machines, and have thought in terms of machines since Mr. Ford's model T. They have never had any conditioning in hand work in their whole experience—which is true of no other group of manufacturers in the world. In Mr. Thorstein Veblen's phrase, they have a use-and-wont that is unique.

This isn't quite all. Other manufacturers have to buy machine tools at definite, fixed prices. The automobile industry has a certain tool-making capacity of its own. And the automobile companies are heavily interested in outside tool-making concerns. In slack seasons, rather than have equipment stand idle, they can run up a machine at practically no cost whatever. When an automobile company is working out a retooling program that costs millions of dollars, one machine more or less doesn't count.

It is understood that Mr. Knudsen laid three problems before his Detroit associates: fuselages, engines and flying instruments. He wanted to know whether fuselages couldn't be stamped out, like automobile bodies, in a high-speed operation. The automobile industry—particularly Briggs and Fisher—has great stamping capacity, the most powerful stamping tools ever made. Packard is already making preparations for manufacturing the British Rolls Royce engine, Mr. Knudsen's General Motors the Allison, Ford its own simplified version of the Rolls Royce. It is understood that the automobile companies will report to Mr. Knudsen in a few weeks, that they will be ready to commence work early next spring, perhaps in February.

Subassemblies of fuselages, engines and instruments do not, of course, make a fighting plane. Readers may recall that last summer this department pointed out that the NDAC apparently had an agreement with the airplane companies under which the automobile industry was not to make airplanes in competition with it—an agreement that, in my opinion, was infinitely dangerous. The NDAC is mute about Mr. Knudsen's future plans. Conceivably the automobile industry's subassemblies might be turned over to the airplane industry for completion. There is also a rumor that the government will be asked to build new airplane assembly plants.

In Detroit, Mr. Knudsen spoke of 12,000 bombers—not 20,000, as President Roosevelt said. Their total cost was estimated at \$2,000,000,000. However, I am informed that these figures are entirely tentative. No money has been appropriated by Congress; no figure, as nearly as I can find out, has even been considered by our army or the British. Mr. Knudsen's friends say that when he gets his set-up, the only governing factor on the number of planes he can turn out will be the number that can be effectively used against Hitler—12,000, or twice that, or four times that. If all this is true—as I am assured it is—Mr. Knudsen's Detroit meeting is more important than the battles of France and England, the most important event of the Second World War. What gives the observer a

creepy feeling is that nothing much happened except that a big manufacturer—which, despite his dollar-a-year government job, is what Mr. Knudsen is—spoke to a few other private manufacturers.

Washington

T. R. B.

Mr. Flynn on War Hysteria

BY THE TIME this appears in print the election will be part of history. But it has had in it one lesson of tremendous, even terrifying importance for Americans.

My own diagnosis of the current of thought and emotion during the campaign may be wrong. For what it is worth here it is. The administration of the President was in serious difficulties in September, 1939, when the war began. This was still so in January of this year.

After this the President dropped consideration of domestic problems and concentrated on the war. He sold the country the following proposition: that our first line of defense was England; that as soon as Hitler completed his conquest of England he would turn to the conquest of this hemisphere, including the United States; that, therefore, the only great issue that was worth our attention was to arm against that horrifying expectation and to aid Britain in every way possible.

The cornerstone of this whole attack was the proposition that Hitler would come to America when he was through with England. No man who has traveled around this country as much as I have can have any doubt about the fact that the American people adopted and believed this alarm.

Now, how was that proposition sold to America? And it is in that technique, partly deliberate, partly fortuitous, that I see the grave and frightening lesson of the episode.

It would not be true to say that this job of salesmanship was done by the President alone, or through his party. The presidential office is of course a tremendous propagandist engine on a subject of this sort. There is an immense multitude which is without heated partisan bias that takes the occupant of the White House at par between elections—no matter who is President. On foreign matters there is a disposition to act on the principle that politics ends at the waterline. Moreover, the patriotic emotional nerve is a very sensitive one. What the President says appears in great prominence on the first pages of every newspaper. When he goes on the air, which he can do almost at will, the whole country gathers round its loudspeakers and listens with attention and respect. In addition, through party organs, through his officials, particularly Cabinet officers, army and navy officers, he can get a press for his ideas which no one can match. The President began a fire as soon as the war started. He gave out alarms about spies. He had the Attorney General go on the screen and call on the people to notify the department of suspicious persons. A spy alarm from the President is a thousand times more effective than one from anyone else. He notified the country of submarines off our coast. He made speeches describing how Hitler could come here by the air.

All this was powerful. But there was another propaganda energy loose infinitely more powerful. This was the radio and the movies. I do not refer to the use made of these agencies by politicians or publicists on sponsored or institutional broadcasts. I refer to the general, run-of-the-

mine clatter of the radio all day long, and to the newsreels. I do not know and certainly do not charge that there was any intent in all this. It so happened that all those who controlled these agencies chanced to be hospitable to the idea of the war hysteria. But it also arose almost without design out of the very circumstances. The war had to be reported on and commented on. The professional reporters and commentators all pumped away—hour after hour, day after day, on the strings that thrilled to the hysteria. The war is a dramatic event. It lends itself to the techniques of the showman. The radio, the movies, are primarily devices of showmanship. And so every program, singer, master of ceremonies—or nearly every one—took up the theme.

The woman in her home, with the radio turned on almost all day, the filling-station man, the small merchant, the taxi-cab driver, people in trains, in cars, in shops of all sorts have pouring upon their consciousness from morning until night one program after another, telling the story of the war in the most dramatic tones, announcers calling on listeners to come to the aid of the government, programs interrupted to bring bulletins, programs interrupted to enable the army to appeal for men—men! men! quick! no time to lose—little dramas, broadcasters, news-crooners, news reporters, broadcasts from abroad.

The effect of this attack upon the mind produced the inevitable result—a condition of terror, growing alarm that it is only a question of a little time when we shall have to meet the Nazi terror in our own streets and our own homes. The President started this fire and it sped around the land until the public mind was a conflagration of fear.

The public speaker, talking to a few hundred or a few thousand people in a hall or theatre, may well feel himself very ineffectual while this storm rages against the minds of millions of people every hour of the day.

What will happen to us as a people if this instrument—the radio—or the movies, should come under the dominion of a single mind or authority? We have been accustomed to cherish and air our differences of opinion so long that we may think this is something quite inseparable from us. There will be men always who will do their own thinking. But if in this country any man or group of men should get into their hands and use as agency of propaganda the radio, it will be possible to do here what has been done in Germany and Italy. One of the first great tasks of the liberal, therefore, must be to sit down now and take thought on how to protect this powerful instrument from a deliberate use, like the more or less accidental use made of it in this war-alarm blitz-push. With the coming of the new frequency modulation set-up, this is the time to deal with that problem.

JOHN T. FLYNN

[If Mr. Flynn merely wants to say that the radio has a great influence and that it would be a dangerous instrument if controlled for propaganda purposes, he is obviously right. If he wants to imply that the reason President Roosevelt began to arouse the people about the international danger was merely that the domestic program was going badly, his opinion is nonsense. The President, like the people themselves, believed there was a real danger; it was the facts reported by the radio and the press, and interpreted by the commentators, that aroused them. We should have been ill served by a system of information that did not produce this result. — THE EDITORS]

Our America

Cabin in the Sky, book by Lynn Root, lyrics by John Latouche, music by Vernon Duke. Martin Beck Theatre, October 25, 1940.

Susanna and the Elders, by Lawrence Langner and Armina Marshall. Morosco Theatre, October 29, 1940.

THE NEW MUSICAL PLAY for Miss Ethel Waters is divided into two acts. The first of these pours along with remarkable success, a splendid fullness and variety, the dialogue much richer than our stage as a rule can show. Mr. Albert Lewis' directing of this dialogue is, too, unusually expert. Mr. George Balanchine has brought his experience with ballet to the staging. His work is good in the realistic portions as well as in those that are lyric or fantastic or revue or chorus. The exceptions to this excellence are some of his designs for the group dancing, which seem to me monotonous and often merely ugly. In them his male dancers seem much more like amateurs from a ballet school (modern style) than performers capable of the racial vigor and incredible rhythm that Negro dancers possess. All these dancers, incidentally, seemed to be three-fourths white, slight, and even peaked, in physique, and in their movement high-strung and fidgety like lesser Massines. The orchestra was exceptional.

Mr. Boris Aronson's décor was more than enchanting, the settings especially, though the costumes were very good.

Miss Ethel Waters is extraordinarily good all through this first act, with a fine range of theatre, as it were, a genuine versatility in feeling and technique. Simple character and emotion, plain folk ways, hints of clowning, and singing beyond words expert. At times these songs may even seem moving to some people. As for me I am so little broken in to torch songs and their parallels in general that the appalling words Miss Waters has to sing prevent my having any emotions of any kind outside of certain musical values of rhythm and tone; I can only admire the astonishing skill with which she executes them.

Mr. Dooley Wilson, as Little Joe Jackson, the beloved and erring husband who is finally saved in heaven for his wife's dear sake, has a part that is less varied and less exacting than Miss Waters' of course, but he gives a performance that is right from start to finish and witty all through.

This first act of "*Cabin in the Sky*" might easily set us off to theorizing in one direction after another. First of all—to my mind—is the fact that the words, their quality and vagary, their speech rhythms, the imagery they serve, and the spoken rhythm, are very much more promising as theatre medium than the dead stuff we usually get, the writing itself that we must listen to in plays. Whenever that curious barrier of the so-called natural is established as a play's style, and the assumption reigns that what audiences like is a close copy of what is in life, we get for the most part a speech-medium that is as still-born, pseudo-photographic, banal and journalistic as that in the average newspaper editorial. On Broadway the average play with a serious intention is almost impossible to listen to. But here the playwright has an outlet in terms of another race. He may even say to himself, perhaps, now look, we have these simple African creatures who are known to use bright and unexpected words, figures of speech, and to be

capable of quaintness or passion, childlikeness and illiteracy, sweetness and guile or what not, as well as expressions nobody on Broadway knows (expressions and uses that are, likelier than not, mere survivals of a proper and basic English language—there's a joke for you!—forgotten or unheard in the scumble of a big city). This being the case, the playwright may take a fling as it were, a fling into a wider, looser, more theatrical, perhaps more poetical even, manner of speaking. We may think what we like about that point, but the fact remains that in this Negro medium flexibility would seem to be more easily achieved, plus freshness, vividness and the impression of surprise and light.

The second act of "*Cabin in the Sky*" gives the impression of having been monkeyed with by a number of theatre monkeyers. The Negro wit and grace of spirit and charm of phrase that appeared in the first act is now more than likely to turn into wisecracks and cheap efforts at repartee. The average Times Square repartee is nothing very much beyond that sort of thing; the dialogue of wit that is intended ends by being merely the cracking back and forth of riffraff—Times Square gets bright by being commoner and more obvious—smart dog eat smart dog. The great thing needed for that last act of "*Cabin in the Sky*" is a belief in the first act—with its particular depths, touching humanity and theatre qualities. On Broadway, strange to say, that might be a large order.

Weak Hams.—We have had now two forays into what might be called Americana this season, the first being "*Washington Slept Here*," and second, "*Susanna and the Elders*." They are pieces that, fundamentally, perhaps, are both equally vulgar—certainly one of them is as insensitive as the other to the American scene and story, and each of them is the fruit of a wretched, cheap theatre appeal.

But while we are all excited about the war in Europe and about America's position and opportunity as regards refugees, whether jeweled or not jeweled, gilded or not gilded—the number of each sort arriving at present is another subject—we may pause to note that we expect a certain illumination, or sympathetic scale of values, in the development of native material to theatrical uses.

The story of "*Susanna and the Elders*" is laid in a New England socialistic community, Harmony Heights, 1878. There is a good panel of varied characters, acted by the company with some degree of effectiveness, and the whole production is ably staged by Mr. Worthington Miner (of a strong stomach we may assume).

Mr. Brooks Atkinson, of The New York Times, expresses with dignity and native perception the occasion's main drift when he says that the situation, the people shown here, "represented idealistic attempts to begin a new way of life. They were part of the great surge of hope and courage that filled the hearts of Americans then. . . . But that is not what interests the authors most. They have been captivated by the program for scientific breeding at Harmony Heights. . . . The tone of the writing and acting is prurient. . . . To have a good subject thrown away so foolishly is doubly disappointing. . . . Cheap and immature."

To anyone seeing this production the glory goes quite obviously to Mr. Stewart Chaney's settings and costumes. His interest is much farther above the naval.

STARK YOUNG

Two Fables

THE WESTERNER" is not in the slam-bang tradition of the standard horse opera. (Spare a minute of silence here for Tom Mix, who died recently. His car threw him.) It's a Sam Goldwyn special, and so there is less of action than of handsome production: good sets, good locations, first-rate camera (Gregg Toland). It is a story of cattle-men v. homesteaders principally, though what keeps it moving is the relationship between Gary Cooper as a saddle bum run afoul of frontier justice, and Walter Brennan, justice itself, enthroned behind a bar and a handsome-looking six-shooter. The cowboy misses being lynched through a ruse that is kept up through the story, a rather silly passion on the part of Brennan for the actress Lily Langtry. But one of the farmers has a daughter, and if you picture the former as Fred Stone, as busy and sorry in crepe hair as ever, and the latter as a little gal whose assurance and diction make just about as faint an excuse for stepping in front of a bullet as was ever brought forward, even for the frontier—you will write that part in yourself, though I hope not. The homesteaders are burned out in a nice fire sequence and Cooper has to go after his cranky and treacherous pal and come a-shooten.

Still I found it an enjoyable affair, partly because of the background, the hills and dust and hosses, the hot little town, the men in their singular but natural get-up; partly because of the Messrs. Cooper and Brennan, and the fetching business they were given to do. There are some good lines, but those two more or less create their parts, and they are parts of American life we have come to believe in, the personification of legend, the character realized, moving and talking. Cooper in particular is made to order for almost everything of the kind that has been written since "The Virginian"—a tall cut of lean meat but with shoulders, slow to talk and easy with humor and a very rough man on a sack of Bull Durham, fast in action, essentially gentle, and handsome as handsome does. Maybe he never happened, but you can't convince me, and what the hell are all you little girls still doing in the East? As for the non-feminine draw, I guess you could spare Mr. Cooper so long as the going is easy: when it begins to rough up he seems like a number-one man you'd pick to have around—which thought I will bet occurred more than once to director William Wyler in his working out of this story.

"A Dispatch from Reuter's" is one of a long line, which I wish they would soon tie a knot in and call it a day. It is the Warner Great Men and How They Grew series, and the GM was first Paul Muni but now seems to be Edward G. Robinson for keeps. It is a pattern they don't like to break: about the man who has the perfect mousetrap to save society and spends most of the picture watching the weeds grow in front of his door, with scoffers scoffing and the little trusting woman trusting and the world about to go to hell when suddenly he runs, rides, swims and fights his way to a prominent position where the world with its face going black and its tongue popping out can see him prime the device with a piece of store cheese and lo, it works, and lo, they are on his heroic chest like a staff officer's medals, and humanity gets a breather. This time it is the story of Julius Reuter, who flew stock quotations with pigeons, and

when the telegraph killed that, flew news over the wires, and was down because of unfair competition, and then was up because of a new idea (flash) and dauntless spirit. But since Warner Brothers started with Pasteur, the Great Man has to serve humanity, and so Reuter's ideal is not cutting a nice piece off the end for himself, but "making the world smaller." He is selfless. Edna Best is his ever loyal wife, and still he won't give in.

Edward G. Robinson does good work in making the part credible; Albert Basserman, Nigel Bruce, Gene Lockhart and Montagu Love are successful in varying degrees at being in foolish situations with dignity and a show of purpose. The parts where the real technical story comes through, the work in the pigeon loft, the quickening of schedules, the selling of wire service and all, are interesting stuff when they get a break. Naturally, the actual story is an exciting one. But the actual story did not fit the Warner biography pattern, so they let it go and mumbled interminably about something else. It isn't only that history is twisted in spite of all the care in researching for the authentic in costumes, offices, devices and customs of a hundred years ago. The motivations of the story itself are screwy—Eddie Albert as the dreamy "assistant," the general air of sanctity, etc. Put it down as a feeble fable, and write Warner's *today* demanding they start a biographical series on that farmer's daughter, or, "The Salesman in the Dell."

OTIS FERGUSON

The Bandwagon

"My problem, Anne Hirst," writes "A Listener," "is what to do with my wife. We've been married for three years and have three children." — *From the Lonely Hearts column in The New York Post.*

Report of Progress

Dr. Eugene B. Elliott, state superintendent of public instruction, remarked that Cody "is looking forward to his next fifty years with keen anticipation; he declares he is stronger now than the day he was born." — *From an item printed in The Detroit News.*

My Kingdom for a Hemingway

Willkie to Make Chest Appeal Tomorrow. — *Headline appearing in The San Francisco Chronicle.*

No Taking in Washing

Xandra's Order of the Bath. 1. First you rise out of the foam like Venus (Xandra's Sea Bath—\$3.50). 2. Then you rub briskly with Body Friction (\$2.50). 3. Apply Body Lotion (\$2.50). 4. Smooth with liquid Poudre Cologne (\$3.50). 5. Dab on Body Sachet (\$2.50). And emerge from it all restored, scented, and a goddess. — *From a Bergdoff-Goodman ad in The New York Times.*

Knight of the Blood Bath

Soviet inventors specializing in aviation, artillery and rifles have received the title "Hero of Socialist Labor," it was announced today.

Josef Stalin was the first to receive this title, on his sixtieth birthday last December. — *A. P. dispatch from Moscow printed in The New York Post.*

Spilling the Beans

Mr. Baruch learned from Churchill that the French relied solely on the British for supply of shells. . . . He further learned from Churchill that England wasn't ready because she was unprepared. — *From Boake Carter's column in The Boston Daily Globe.*

End-of-the-Rainbow Department

MADLIN. 15c. to 6:30. Dinnerware free to ladies. ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO. — *Movie ad in The Chicago Tribune.*

A Chicken in Every Pot

Republican senatorial candidate Jay Cooke was telling a Republican meeting at the Union League some of the arguments

to be used against Roosevelt. [He said] "The reelection of Roosevelt will result in dictatorship. When you have dictatorship, you have socialization of women." — *Item in The Philadelphia Record.*

Or Something

Rising prices encourage production. At the same time, they tend to shut off consumption by those whose demands are least intense. This is the truly democratic way to control industry. — *Dr. Lewis Haney in The Chicago Herald-American.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; \$1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. — THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Hold on to Hawaii

SIR: Whether or not Hawaii is successful in its efforts toward statehood and equal rights, the plebiscite of November 5, 1940, is of historic importance to other Americans—most of whom limit the beautiful islands to vague descriptions of palms, ukeleles and hula dancers in grass skirts and leis. To many mainland Americans, it is surprising to learn that the islands are as progressive as any of the full-fledged states, and equally advanced in cultural and educational achievements. As a matter of fact, Hawaiian schools were so well known in the eighteen fifties that many Californians sent their children there to be educated, rather than back to New England. California, of course, had very few schools at that time and certainly none to compare with those in Hawaii. Today, there are 186 public schools and 90 private schools in Hawaii, with a total enrolment of 102,222. The University of Hawaii has a student body of 3,000.

Equally progressive in every other phase of development, this American community often finds itself unjustly labeled as a "foreign" country. Witness *Fortune*, January, 1940, p. 86. Actually, Hawaii is an integral part of the United States, with this status for more than forty years.

Pearl Harbor's value to us cannot be overestimated. It is imperative that a friendly people inhabit the islands of this great defense area in the Pacific. They are friendly to us because they are part of us—but as long as their status is merely territorial, they suffer the ignominy of taxation without representation, as well as many other disadvantages of political and economic inequality. Japan is well aware of the worth of the Hawaiian Islands. Statehood would assure the future of the islands both politically and economically, and its American citizens would be admitted to full rights of franchise, instead of the limited form of citizenship allotted to them under territorial rule.

Overland Park, Kan.

VERA M. THOMPSON

Democracy Needs No Conscription

SIR: Within a democracy, a volunteer makes a much better fighter—a much better man all-around for military service—than a conscript. A volunteer is perfectly willing to meet the enemy; to face whatever comes. He does not have to be begged, or coaxed, or coddled, or driven into drilling, or otherwise preparing himself for his duties. If he had not wanted to do these things, he would not have volunteered in the first place.

A volunteer presents no problem to his officers. He asked for

it, and he will take it as it comes. On the other hand, a conscript did not ask for it. He thinks constantly of the job he lost, the home he was forced to leave, the ill luck which caused him to be caught in the draft, his "ruined" life, and a thousand and one other things which reduce his value as a fighter. He tries to think up ways to avoid drill, to make the sick list, or to get a discharge from service. A conscript is simply out of place, and he knows it.

Conscripts are not wanted in the navy. Should an effort be made to conscript men for the navy, serious objections can be expected. Why? Because navy officers simply do not want to be bothered with them; do not want them around. Should a submarine or destroyer commander discover that he had a conscript on board, he would not rest until he got rid of him. Certainly no conscripts will be used in the navy if the navy officers have anything to say about the matter. In no case would a conscript be placed in a position of responsibility on a combatant ship, for the simple reason that no commanding officer would trust him.

The young men of the United States will volunteer when their country is in danger. Someone may argue that the young men did not volunteer in 1917. This is true, but the country was not in danger then—and the people knew it.

CHARLES S. SEELY,

Chicago, Ill.

Lieut. Commander, USN (Ret.)

P. S.: The opinions and assertions expressed above are the private ones of the writer and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the Navy Department, or the naval service at large.

Literary Argument

SIR: Rolfe Humphries once found Karl Marx, or at least Maxim Litvinov, lurking in the poetry of A. E. Housman. He has a more than eagle eye for what his friends call "the class angle." It is odd that out of eighty-three pages of verse he quite missed [The New Republic, August 12] thirty-one that are concerned directly with: The S. F. General Strike, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Spanish and Chinese wars, the Moscow trials, the present war. These are all simple enough poems. Many were printed in *The New Masses*, some, I believe, while Mr. Humphries was poetry editor. Others appeared in various magazines of the Popular Front period, others in *The New Republic*. Two appeared in *Partisan Review*. They mention subjects distasteful to Mr. Humphries: the Kronstadt "Rebellion," the plight of Kropotkin and others in Bolshevik Russia. Mr.

Humphries must have leafed through the book to find the poems he quotes. Could his distaste have blinded him to thirty-one pages of verse that he understood quite well?

Ten pages (he wishes to count pages, not I) contain lyrics and short elegies of personal relationship, mostly love poems, "simple, sensuous, etc." Unfortunately for Mr. Humphries' critical technique, the poem "Gic to Har" was printed in *The New Republic*, and a few readers may recall that it deals with an extremely specific rose-breasted grosbeak. (There is no such beast as a "crimson grosbeak": "study nature, not books.") Like everyone else, I have always found the Britannica perfect "lenitive" reading, hardly an erudite attitude.

The first passage quoted in the review is from a mildly ironic poem to George Santayana, and opens a series of six philosophical poems. I should be surprised if Mr. Humphries liked these, but no matter. The last eight pages contain a poem, written during a summer in the Sierra Nevada (making my living at natural-history field work, Mr. Humphries), which deals with the impact, in that environment, of social decay and impending war upon the mind.

This is not the book Mr. Humphries reviewed. I am not concerned with "literary" matters in this instance. Mr. Humphries is welcome to his opinion of my vocabulary. But, I came into the Popular Front from the Left, and went out by the same door. Mr. Humphries knows this. He has either locked himself in the burning building or left by some other exit. In its political articles *The New Republic* does not handle its opponents with devices like: "Norman Thomas says, 'I am in favor . . . of fascism,'" where the dots represent the missing words, "a militant struggle against." I do not believe that it has permitted, consciously, its literary pages to be so used. In fact, the literary editor has in the past been of inestimable help to me in shaping the material for the book in question. Which only makes this incident the more baffling.

San Francisco, Cal.

KENNETH REXROTH

Stickney v. Moody

SIR: I'm sure Mr. Wilson [*The New Republic*, October 14] must have meant the *fourth* tercet instead of the third of Stickney's poem as being bad. It is *terrible*—while the third is beautiful. And why is it necessary to belabor Moody in order to make Stickney shine the brighter? Does belaboring Roosevelt do that for Willkie?

New York City

W. R. BENÉT

[Mr. Benét is absolutely right: it is the fourth, not the third, stanza of Stickney's poem that is bad. My depreciation of Moody, however, was not the result of a desire to exalt Stickney. I have never liked Moody's poetry.—This is an appropriate place to mention that the parody of Kipling's "If" in Mr. Chauncey Hackett's review, October 21, should have read, "If you can *lose*," instead of "keep your head." — E. W.]

Innocence in Oregon

SIR: In your special campaign supplement in *The New Republic* for October 7 you blame the Republicans for the oppressive and unjust labor act now on the Oregon statute books. This is not precisely fair or accurate. The law was enacted at the polls in a referendum election. Its passage was opposed in *The Salem Statesman*, a daily newspaper published by Charles A. Sprague, at that time Republican nominee for Governor. Mr. Sprague is now Governor of the state.

I submit this statement as no brief for the Republicans, but merely to keep the record straight. I shall vote for Roosevelt with considerable pleasure.

Portland, Ore.

RICHARD L. NEUBERGER

Plug

SIR: I agree heartily with Mr. William Saroyan's letter published in your October 7 issue. I wish, however, that it had won the Pulitzer Prize instead of "The Time of Your Life." Pomona, Calif.

AUBREY B. HAINES

Don't Change Your Oil, Mister

SIR: May I add my bit to the testimony of H. A. Whipple in the August 26 issue.

I drive a Chevvy, in fact I'm over a year gone on my fourth one, and except for a change of oil in the breaking-in period I have simply added as needed and never changed oil on any of them and yet have had just as good performance and have effected just as good trades as at any time when I formerly religiously changed oil every 1,000 or 1,500 miles.

Milwaukee, Wis.

ERNEST J. MORRIS

From The New Republic Mail Bag

The old cellophane-enclosed payroll-dollar gag turns up now in Middleton, Wisconsin, where H. E. Scott says the citizens voted 324 to 91 to purchase a municipal electric plant. Printed on the cellophane wrapper of around a thousand one-dollar bills was what you might expect: "The Northern States Power Company pays OUT AN AVERAGE OF \$8,500 PER YEAR, which stays in this community, for wages," etc. It goes on to say that a municipal plant wouldn't do half that. Not in cellophane, anyway. . . . Mark Starr of the ILGWU passes on some reports he gets from England, one that the East End hop pickers have gone out to provide for the year's beer as usual; the other from Katherine M. Starr, who comments on the tough-mindedness and sense of humor of all around her vicinity, "on the air-route march for Plymouth and other Southwest towns." The man who had his garden blown completely into the air merely remarked he'd always wanted a sunken garden and probably never could have afforded one.

Thomas A. Kingswood writes from Chicago to uphold the good name of the Anglo-Saxon Federation, or perhaps of Henry Ford's Mr. Cameron, or perhaps both. We had said (September 30) Ford's "right-hand man, Cameron, is an officer in the Anglo-Saxon Federation, a fascist group." Mr. Kingswood says that the group is not fascist and that Mr. Cameron is only an ex-officer anyway, "no longer taking active part in the work." He sends us some literature showing the direct descent of all true Anglo-Saxons from the tribes of Israel. A good bit of the literature was written by W. J. Cameron. Mr. Kingston says Mr. Ford is so un-American he personally wouldn't ride in one of his cars. If anybody sees any brass rings on this merry-go-round, please write, it's very dizzy here.

Blanche Watson writes from Ocean Grove, New Jersey, to quarrel with Edmund Wilson's review of Van Wyck Brooks's "Indian Summer" (September 30), which she finds nagging and misrepresentative of Brooks's achievements. . . . A. W. Stieglitz, White Plains, New York, wishes Jerome Mellquist had given some attention to the lectures and other educational work done by the Metropolitan Museum, when he wrote "Will the Metropolitan Wake Up?" (October 14). . . . R. F. Christoffers of Los Angeles reports that the chief of the Los Angeles Public Library has banned Joyce's "Ulysses."

Second-Class Letter Box. — W. M. Meredith Jr. of Darien, Connecticut, has been thinking about world affairs and sent us some jingles of which we pass one along to you:

The Son of God goes forth once more
With all assistance short of war.

Books in Review

The Boys in the Back Room: James M. Cain and John O'Hara

RISE from a long submergence in the politics and literature of the nineteenth century, during which I read almost nothing that people were reading, I have just regaled myself with practically the complete works of James M. Cain, Horace McCoy, Richard Hallas, John O'Hara, William Saroyan, John Steinbeck and Hans Otto Storm. These writers are all of fairly recent arrival; they have most of them been influenced by Hemingway; they all live or have lived in California, and they have all written more or less about California. They thus constitute a sort of group, and they suggest certain generalizations. It is my purpose to write some notes on the subject, which will be run in this department in several instalments.

Let us begin with Mr. Cain and his school. "The Postman Always Rings Twice" came out in 1934; and Mr. Cain's second novel, "Serenade," in 1937. They were followed by other similar novels which apparently derived from Mr. Cain. The whole group stemmed originally from Hemingway, but it was a Hemingway turned picaresque; and it was allied also to the new school of mystery writers of the type of Dashiell Hammett.

Mr. Cain remained the best of these novelists. Horace McCoy, the author of "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?" and "I Should Have Stayed Home," had a subject with possibilities, the miserable situation of movie-struck young men and women who starve and degrade themselves in Hollywood; and the first of his books is worth reading for its description of one of those dance marathons that were popular in the first years of the depression. But the faults of Mr. McCoy's first novel—lack of characterization, lack of motivation—show up much more nakedly in the second. "You Play the Black and the Red Comes Up," by the writer who calls himself Richard Hallas, is a clever pastiche of Cain, which is mainly as two-dimensional as a movie. It is indicative of the degree to which this kind of writing has finally become formulaized that it should have been possible for a visiting Englishman to tell this story in the Hemingway-Cain vernacular almost without a slip.

The hero of the typical Cain novel is a good-looking down-and-outer, who leads the life of a vagrant and rogue. He invariably falls under the domination, usually to his ruin, of a vulgar and determined woman from whom he finds it impossible to escape. In the novels of McCoy and Hallas, he holds our sympathy through his essential innocence; but in the novels of Cain himself, the situation is not so simple. Cain's heroes are capable of extraordinary exploits, but they are always treading the edge of a precipice. They are doomed, like the heroes of Hemingway: they will eventually fall off the precipice. But whereas in Hemingway's stories, it is simply that these brave and decent men have had a dirty deal from life, the hero of a novel by Cain is an individual of mixed unstable character, who carries his precipice with him like Pascal.

His fate is thus forecast from the beginning; but in the

meantime, he has fabulous adventures—samples, as it were, from "A Thousand and One Nights" of the screwy Pacific Coast: there is jungle lust in roadside lunch-rooms, family motor-trips that end in murder, careers catastrophically broken by the vagaries of bisexual personality, the fracas created by a Mexican Indian introduced among the phonies of Hollywood.

All these writers are also preëminently the poets of the tabloid murder. Cain himself is particularly ingenious at tracing from their first beginnings the tangle that gradually tightens around the necks of the people involved in one of those bizarre and brutal crimes that figure in the American papers; even at showing—in "Serenade," at any rate—the larger tangles of social interest which these deathly little knots represent. Such a subject might provide a great novel: in "An American Tragedy," such a subject did. But as we follow, in a novel by Mr. Cain, the development of one of his plots, we find ourselves more and more disconcerted by knocking up—to the destruction of illusion—against the blank and hard planes and angles of something we know all too well: the damned old conventions of Hollywood. Here is the Hollywood gag—the echo of the murdered man's voice that is given back by the mountains after he himself is dead, and the party in "Serenade," in which the heroine stabs the villain under cover of acting out a bull-fight; the punctual Hollywood coincidence—the popping-up of the music-loving sea-captain, who is the *deus ex machina* of "Serenade"; the Hollywood reversal of fortune—the singer who loses his voice and then gets it back again, becoming famous and rich in a five-minute sequence.

Mr. Cain is actually a writer for the studios (as are also, or have also been, Mr. Hallas and Mr. McCoy). These novels are produced in his off-time; and they are a kind of Devil's parody of the movies. Mr. Cain is the *âme damnée* of Hollywood. All the things that the Catholic censorship has excluded: sex, debauchery, unpunished crime and sacrilege against the Catholic Church—Mr. Cain has let them all loose, as if with a pent-up gusto that the reader cannot but share. What a pity that it is impossible for such a writer to create and produce his own pictures!

In the meantime, "Serenade" is a definite improvement on "The Postman." It, too, has its trashy aspect, its movie foreshortenings and too well oiled action; but it establishes a surer illusion. "The Postman" was always in danger of becoming unintentionally funny. But even here brilliant moments of insight redeemed the unconscious burlesque; and there is enough of the real poet in Cain—both in writing and in imagination—to make one hope for something better than either.

John O'Hara also derives from Hemingway, and his short stories sound superficially like Hemingway's. His longer stories, like Cain's, have it in common with Hemingway that the heroes and heroines are doomed. But O'Hara's

main interest in life is of an entirely different kind from Hemingway's, and his writing really belongs to a different category of fiction.

O'Hara is not a poet like Hemingway, but primarily a social commentator; and in this field of social habits and manners, ways of talking and writing letters and dressing, he has done work that is original and interesting. It is essentially the same kind of thing that Henry James and his followers did, but the center of attention has shifted. The older novelist dealt almost exclusively with a well-to-do upper stratum, and the chief contrast he had to depict was between the American upper classes and the European upper classes, or between the established and cultivated people and the vulgar *nouveaux riches*. John O'Hara subjects to a Proustian scrutiny the social web of a large Pennsylvania town, the potpourri of New York night-life in the twenties, the nondescript fringes of Hollywood. In all this he has explored for the first time from his peculiar semi-snobish point of view a good deal of interesting territory: the relations between Catholics and Protestants, the relations between non-college men and college men, the relations between the underworld and "legitimate" business, the ratings of café society; and to read him on a fashionable bar or the Gibbsville country club is to be shown on the screen of a fluoroscope gradations of social prestige which one had not seen before. There is no longer any hierarchy here, either of cultivation or wealth: the people are all being shuffled around, hardly knowing what they are or where they are headed, but each is clutching some family tradition, some membership in a selective organization, some personal association with the famous, which will supply him with some special self-respect. In the meantime, they mostly go under. They are snubbed, they are humiliated, they fail. The cruel side of social snobbery is really Mr. O'Hara's main theme. Only rarely, as in the excellent story called "Price's Always Open," do the forces of democracy strike back.

This social surface, then, Mr. O'Hara analyzes with delicacy, and usually with remarkable accuracy. His grasp of what lies underneath it is, however, not so sure. His point of view toward his principal characters tends to be rather clinical; but even where his diagnosis is clear, he does not seem to understand them very deeply. The girl in "Butterfield 8" is a straight case of a Freudian complex, somewhat aggravated by social maladjustment; but we don't really know her well. Julian English of "Appointment in Samarra" was apparently the victim of a bad heredity, worked upon by various demoralizing influences; yet the fundamental springs of his behavior are never really shown. The whole book is in the nature of an explanation of why Julian threw the highball in the face of the Irish social climber; yet the explanation doesn't explain why he should have ended by committing suicide. As for "Hope of Heaven," I have not been able to fathom it at all—though here, too, there seems to be discernible a Freudian behavior-pattern. Is the personality of the writer who is telling the story supposed to play some role in connection with the conduct of the other characters of which he himself is unaware?—or does Mr. O'Hara himself not quite know what he is up to here?

One gets the impression—corroborated by a statement which he was recently reported to have made in an inter-

view—that Mr. O'Hara improvises more or less and never reorganizes or revises. His longer stories always sound like first drafts which ought to be trimmed and tightened up—which might be turned into very fine little novels, but which, as it is, remain rather diffuse and rather blurred as to their general intention. What is the relevance to the story, for example, of the newspaperwoman in "Appointment in Samarra," whose career is described at length? She is amusing, but the part she plays in the story doesn't seem to warrant this introduction. What is the point of the newspaper reporter who suddenly gets into the picture, and more or less between us and it, at the end of "Butterfield 8"? What on earth is the justification—aside from establishing a general atmosphere of crookedness—of the long story about the man who stole the traveler's checks at the beginning of "Hope of Heaven"? If Mr. O'Hara has definite ideas about the significance of these characters in his scheme, I can't see that he has brought it out; and it seems to me that in any case he has slighted his job. The same sort of thing is true of his short stories. When they are good, they are marvelously good: in the short form he can get an effect as he has not yet been able to do in his novels. But there are a good many stories that do not hit it, and these go in with the ones that do. It happens that he is gifted with a clean and sure style, a style which in itself shows restraint—so that the distinction of his writing carries him over a good deal of thin ice.

So far as one can tell, Mr. O'Hara has been indulging his literary weaknesses—or rather, in perfecting himself, has chosen a line of least resistance. Each of his novels has been less successful, less ambitious and less well disciplined, than the one that went before. In my opinion, the best of his work consists of "Appointment in Samarra," the admirable long short story called "The Doctor's Son," and his recent book of short stories, "Files on Parade" (though there are also a few memorable ones in the early volume—such as "Ella and the Chinese"). The short stories have distinctly improved while the long stories have distinctly deteriorated. As for "Pal Joey," just published,¹ it is funny, well written, well observed, but, heel for heel, Pal Joey is a come-down after Julian English. "Appointment in Samarra" is a memorable picture both of a provincial snob and of a disorganized drinking-man of the twenties, and of the complexities of the social organism in which he must flourish and die. Pal Joey is merely an ameba of the night-life of the jitter-bug era; and he is a little ameba-monster. One doesn't mind Mr. O'Hara's creating a monster: "Pal Joey" is successful as satire, because Mr. O'Hara is not afraid to go the whole hog; but at the same time he represents a contraction of Mr. O'Hara's interests.

The truth is perhaps that Mr. O'Hara has never really had his bearings since he abandoned the subject of Gibbsville, Pa. He was all awash in "Butterfield 8" in the night-life of New York—though he still kept some capacity for judgment; and in "Hope of Heaven" he showed serious signs of suffering from Hollywood lightheadedness. He partly retrieved himself by becoming the outstanding master of the New Yorker short-story-sketch; but we expected, and still expect, more of him.

EDMUND WILSON

¹ Pal Joey, by John O'Hara. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 195 pages. \$2.

A Job Lot of Poetry

Joyce Kilmer: Poems, Essays, Letters. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 561 pages. \$3.50.

New Journey, by Sydney Salt. Prairie City, Illinois: The Black Faun Press. 60 pages. \$1.

Narration with a Red Piano, by J. Calder Joseph. Cincinnati: The Little Man Press. 48 pages. 50 cents.

The Cock of Heaven, by Elder Olson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 105 pages. \$2.

THERE COULD BE no more fitting time for the appearance of this book," begins the dust-jacket, truthfully enough. I suppose it would take some external stimulus to get most of us to read the collected works of the "great soldier-poet," Joyce Kilmer; and a Second World War is of the right order of magnitude. Kilmer is a simple com-war + Catholicism

pound: _____; Franco's soldiers—Moors and

Literature

Germans excepted—might have gone to battle with his songs upon their lips. His regiment, "the bravest and best in the army," is celebrated with a song that ends, "With the Potsdam Palace on a truck and the Kaiser in a sack/ New York will be seen one Irish green when the Sixty-ninth comes back." Kilmer writes home from the front lines: "It is wrong for a poet—especially a Gael—to be listening to elevated trains when there are screaming shells to hear . . . the bright face of danger to dream about." (Yeats, "On Being Asked for a War Poem," answered that he had better keep his mouth shut.)

Some of Kilmer's poems are better than "Trees," but not enough better for it to matter. He calls the Milky Way, "Main Street, Heaventown," and ends a Thanksgiving poem, "And Oh, thank God for God!" But I do not want to give the impression that his poems are unusually absurd—unusually anything; if they had not existed, it would have been necessary only to copy them. His criticism—this volume includes poems, essays, letters, photographs, and one incredible memoir—is either moral or theological. The silly and sickly evil that is modern [non-Catholic] literature, the "obscene absurdity" of the "materialist theory"—loved subjects—yield only to the finally important: "But is this *truly Catholic*?" He remarks of one poet that his Catholicism is "not so convincing" as that of two other poets; and, speaking of "infidel poets," he confesses, "I have never been able to enjoy the recital, however skillful, of a sacred story by a poet who did not believe in it." The letters are better.

Mr. Sydney Salt's "New Journey" is uneven enough to be puzzling. The book is a sort of pease-porridge-cold of (invented) excerpts from Columbus' log, disconnected lyrics, letters from Columbus to a monk, from the monk to Columbus, from the monk to the author, from the author to the reader. They are full of childish mysticism, a naïveté that delights in such dream-statements as "Man is Destiny, Will his Fate; and Fear is Death." Columbus stands for Man struggling into the Unknown to gain Progress. And—I forgot—Love. Mr. Salt clothes these Sunday-school sentiments in Sunday-school prose, and in verse derived from—"Conquistador" and late Eliot! And, often, the words are fresh, the images come over. So should I

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spare Mr. Salt for his skin, or damn him for his bones? Let me put it too kindly for the sake of the joke: "New Journey" is intensively good and extensively silly.

The *I* of "Narration with a Red Piano," by Mr. J. Calder Joseph, is one's old friend of the twenties, Behaviorist Man—the Noble Savage very much *manqué*, the child stammering his truths from the slums: sentimental, brutal, naïve, gasping out his grief and exultation—sexual or humanitarian—in conscientiously formless and prosy lyrics. "I got a crazy terrible love for you. . . . Got Prayer. Got Coin. Got Fight! . . . the rain glistens/baby tears on the window pain"—why go on? These are the familiar subjects, the familiar method: the man in the street talking to the woman of the streets, in plain American. "It's d' system, see?" So it is, a system that has ruined better writers than Mr. Joseph. There is an introduction by Saroyan: same old Saroyan.

"The Cock of Heaven," by Mr. Elder Olson, presents the contradiction of "New Journey" at a higher level. It is a much more artful and elaborate version of an even less promising conception; in the words of the dust-jacket (few books are as rewarding as their dust-jackets): "This is no sentimental piece of religiosity, but a work of significance and variety—serious and satiric, straightforward and ironic, mystical and realistic. . . . It tells of the Magi who forever seek a Messiah, of the seven Messiahs who are sent to combat the sins (and who invariably fail), and finally, of the modern world, the advent of the ultimate Messiah, and universal catastrophe." And it tells this tale—one a gruff old scientist might think a shade literary—in dozens of the most extravagantly literary styles.

Mr. Olson's sources are many and apparent. Poem Number IV on page 40, V on page 58, XI on page 82, XIII on page 85 (the second line is Donne) are almost pure late Yeats, full of his characteristic properties, words and rhythms; so are parts of a number of others, for instance, XXIV on page 96 and V on page 28. Here is some early Yeats: "Visited but by the hooded wave,/Aye, and all dream-wandering souls." Here is one of the samples of MacLeish: "Invisible/Turner of Seasons! Artificer of Storms! Thou!" All Eliot's periods are surprisingly fully represented—a list would take half a page. I love Hopkins (as Mr. Roosevelt would say, *I hate war*): I simply cannot trust myself to say what Mr. Olson's imitation of Hopkins is like. His Hamlet soliloquy reads more like a Browning parody: "And love—Hewgh, love! Foh, love! What, love, quotha?" And there are echoes of Aiken, Baudelaire, Browning—but I must stop. One can even identify structures: "Animula," "Gerontion," "The End of the World," the choruses of "Murder in the Cathedral."

The reader may say, "What of it?" And I agree: these are symptoms, not causes—but symptoms of the inveterate literariness that vitiates everything it touches. Mr. Olson is the Will to Believe, the Renascence of Wonder: he gives precisely the same credence to everything—everything! "Cold sea-girls," vampires, "ice-pure unicorns," the "rose-blood" (elsewhere, "rose-rain-light") from Christ's wounds, "the horned voluminous worm amid Asian snows"; a ship bears "writ on her wreathèd counter, *Dream*." And he throws together cave-men and Magi, Eliot's rats and Andromeda's dragon, Stalin and the "Enchanted Pilgrims." It is simply impossible to take "The Cock of Heaven" as anything more than a fairy tale, the literary equivalent of (say) "Sche-

herazade" or a good Silly Symphony. But it's a swell fairy story; I read it several times with delight. Mr. Olson has a great faculty for getting things over, for really doing something; and he actually organizes (rather obviously, certainly) both single poems and larger units. You feel, as you do with "L'il Abner" in the comic strips, that you are reading someone with a positive delight in invention, a facility and fertility adequate to any demand. And Mr. Olson is at times charmingly witty; his little Middle English *rondo*, III on page 65, is absolutely perfect of its kind. He is a chameleon almost anyone would like to have for a pet. But he could say with Hamlet (I'd better look through "The Cock of Heaven" to make sure he doesn't): *The time is out of joint*; he belongs to a simpler age; whenever I think of him, it is with a sword-cane, a green beard and an opera cloak, applauding passionately the first performance of "Hernani."

RANDALL JARRELL

A Romantic Genius

Audubon's America, Edited by Donald Culross Peattie. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 320 pages. \$6.

IT WAS Audubon's ambition, in making his portraits of American birds, to show them in action and in their natural habitat. He could not do this alone. He brought to the painting of birds such aptitude, passion and patience as may well be called genius, but his training both in science and art was limited. The backgrounds he left, for the most part, to another, Joseph Mason, that "aimiable boy" whom Audubon found in Ohio, at the age of thirteen, and took with him on the voyage down the Mississippi, did the marvelous flowers, leaves and fruit in the earlier prints, where they often surpass in precision and felicity the rendering of the birds. The landscapes in the prints of the middle period are by George Lehman. And later there were other collaborators. After "The Birds of America" came "The Quadrupeds of America"; by then Audubon's powers were diminishing, and he allowed his son, John Woodhouse Audubon, to paint nearly half of the larger plates for that work.

In "Audubon's America," Donald Culross Peattie has supplied a background for the ornithologist himself and, on occasion, substituted for him. Just as in such a group as that of the Carolina parrots, which is here reproduced, every significant aspect of that perished bird is shown with great vivacity and charm, so Mr. Peattie has neglected nothing we need to know about Jean-Jacques Audubon. Audubon, for instance, gave several accounts of his beginnings, which agree in nothing save that he was born in the New World. Mr. Peattie dispels any mystery that still attaches to his origin, admitting what is uncertain, but dismissing that recent rumor that he was really the lost Dauphin by the simple remark that Louis XVII had deformed ears and Audubon had not. The main narrative is Audubon's own, made up of selections from all his work, with particular attention to that portion of it which has hitherto been neglected or not easily accessible. While Mr. Peattie gives Audubon the benefit of every doubt, he lets nothing dubious get by without comment. What he wants is that we should see the whole man in all his wide range and accomplishment. And in "Audubon's America" we do see him,

in action and in his natural habitat, which was the American wilderness of the heroic age.

However, since Audubon has already had as much acclaim as he deserves as an ornithologist and painter, it is rather as a writer that he is here presented. Audubon wrote voluminously. He kept journals on his travels, he was an untiring correspondent, and some at least of his notes and letters have come down to us untouched. He also wrote to sell, and what he wrote sold, though only after it had passed through the hands of one or another of four editors. Born on the coast of what is now the Republic of Haiti, the illegitimate son of a lieutenant in the French navy and of a Creole mother whose name may be conjectured but is not certainly known, the boy who was first called Fougère was brought up in France. He was eighteen when he returned to America; twenty-two when he set out for Kentucky. He was assimilated to the wilderness as perhaps only one who, deliberately and after the age of fifteen, had adopted the first two names of Jean-Jacques Rousseau could have been. He never quite acquired its speech. When, after his voyage down the Mississippi, he celebrated his arrival in New Orleans with a hangover, his sufferings are recorded with a French accent: "I retired to the Keel Boat; with a bad head Hake occasioned by drinking some Wine." He had then been in this country eighteen years. Yet not all the revision Audubon's prose had to undergo could destroy its vividness. His America had other writers and some better than he, but no other among his contemporaries, not even Catlin, covered so much of the continent. What he saw he set down; if his ear was poor, his sight was remarkable. He is a romantic, at least when young; but the romantic vagueness is dissipated by the accuracy of the hunter, by the discipline of the draftsman.

Audubon is the most famous of the early American ornithologists. He was by no means the first in the field. His immediate rival was Alexander Wilson, whose "American Ornithology" preceded "The Birds of America" and the "Ornithological Biographies" by some years. But Wilson's drawings, compared to Audubon's, are merely laborious. And, besides, the little Paisley weaver, with his pathetic look and pace of a peddler, with his solitary flute from which at night he drew his sad Scottish airs, seems misplaced in the wilderness. Audubon belonged to it. Superficially, at least, he is like it; romantic and brutal; he shares its honest hopes and its irresponsibility in movement; he could enjoy its rough humor and tell its tall tales. He impressed his contemporaries as the perfect woodsman. He could hold his own with all sorts of men: with the slave-owners of the Deep South in their houses and runaway slaves in the swamps; with the young braggarts on the flat-boats of the Mississippi and the pale malarial squatters beyond it. He could handle that odd fish Rafinesque when he came out to see him in Kentucky and fought bats, stark naked, with his host's Cremona violin. He could save himself in that lonely log cabin on the Upper Mississippi, where he watched all preparations being made to murder him, down to the whetting of the knife.

But if Audubon was generous in his sympathies and mingled with ease with other men, he was always set apart from them by his one passionate purpose. His emotions depend on it, and as it advances or is thwarted, he is elated or despondent. He was long poor and always vain and touchy; he had a sharp tongue and most of his friendships

broke up in quarrels. He did not so much belong to the wilderness as in his imagination the wilderness belonged to him. That is the source of his power and sensitiveness, his grace and intensity. It is also the source of his attraction and what is disproportionate in his fame.

There had been so many paintings of American birds before his. It is easy to find fault with them, to say that they are overwrought, that only rarely can living birds be seen so tense with excitement as he habitually depicted them. And yet they are inimitable. Audubon's birds convey the wonder with which they were seen in life, and something of the light of that morning world still clings to them so that the brilliance of their plumage is increased and an excessive wildness is in their gaze. And the prints, taken with the writings that were intended to accompany them, form a record fascinating and incomplete, partial and authentic, of that America whose wild abundance vanished even as Audubon looked at it. There is hunting still in America, but no longer do men live by the black bear and the buffalo. No longer are stacks of grain covered by Carolina parrots. No one will ever again, watching the October sky, wait to see, as Audubon saw, great flocks of Whooping Cranes gradually descend from on high and prepare to alight on the earth. "With necks outstretched, and long bony legs extended behind, they proceed, supported by wings white as snow but tipped with jet, until arriving over the great savannah they wheel their circling flight, and slowly approach the ground, on which, with half-closed wings and outstretched feet, they alight, running for a few steps to break the force of their descent." The America of Audubon affects the imagination like a myth. But for such accurate glimpses into it as this, we might almost believe it was a myth and had never been. JOHN PEALE BISHOP

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Last Essays of Babbitt

Spanish Character and Other Essays, by Irving Babbitt.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 367 pages. \$2.50.

PROFESSOR BABBITT's posthumous collection, like his more deliberate books, runs counter to the easy expectations of the reader. Such collections ordinarily lack unity but show development. These fourteen articles and reviews, by-products of thirty-five years of reading and writing and teaching, give no sense of development whatsoever. On the other hand, taking all the distance between French literature and Oriental religion in their stride, they are integrated by sheer single-mindedness. It is still surprising that a mind moving in such a rich cultural context could come to conclusions that seem so thin and dry. Babbitt was not a man of taste, or a man of ideas either, but a man with a position. In these essays, as in his books and lectures, his critical method is to make a few sweeping generalizations and embellish them with anecdote and allusion. There is, as usual, a contrast between the high seriousness of his main argument and the discursive humor of his many citations. But Babbitt was never a pedant; he only seems so, because he was one of the few academic figures of his generation who even tried to apply his learning to the broader problems of modern life. The result was often quixotic, but—seven years after his death—it seems less old-fashioned than it

did in the heyday of New Humanism. "Even an editor of The New Republic," he wrote in 1917, "may . . . be modern enough to see that democracy needs discipline."

HARRY LEVIN

Contributors

F. C. WEISKOPF is a German-Czecho-Slovakian novelist and critic, now living in the United States. He is finishing a novel, "The Last Danube Waltz."

JOHN DOS PASSOS is the author of "U. S. A.," "The Adventures of a Young Man" and other novels.

LOUIS MACNEICE's most recent book is "Autumn Journal," published by Random House.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER is the author of a book of verse, "Time's Profile." She is writing a series of poems to be called "Poems for Use."

KENNETH LINDSAY has been a member of parliament for Kilmarnock Burghs since 1933 and parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education since 1937.

RANDALL JARRELL is an instructor in English at the University of Texas. He has contributed to Partisan Review, The Southern Review and The Kenyon Review.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP's collected poems will be published by Scribner's next spring.

HARRY LEVIN teaches English and Comparative Literature at Harvard. He edited the Selected Works of Ben Jonson and has contributed to The Criterion, The Atlantic Monthly and The Southern Review.

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